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Family Happiness

Part I

I

We were in mourning for my mother, who had died in the autumn, and I spent all that winter alone in the country with Kátya and Sónya.

Kátya was an old friend of the family, our governess who had brought us all up, and I had known and loved her since my earliest recollections. Sónya was my younger sister. It was a dark and sad winter which we spent in our old house of Pokróvskoe. The weather was cold and so windy that the snowdrifts came higher than the windows; the panes were almost always dimmed by frost, and we seldom walked or drove anywhere throughout the winter. Our visitors were few, and those who came brought no addition of cheerfulness or happiness to the household. They all wore sad faces and spoke low, as if they were afraid of waking someone; they never laughed, but sighed and often shed tears as they looked at me and especially at little Sónya in her black frock. The feeling of death clung to the house; the air was still filled with the grief and horror of death. My mother's room was kept locked; and whenever I passed it on my way to bed, I felt a strange uncomfortable impulse to look into that cold empty room.

I was then seventeen; and in the very year of her death my mother was intending to move to Petersburg, in order to take me into society. The loss of my mother was a great grief to me; but I must confess to another feeling behind that grief—a feeling that though I was young and pretty (so everybody told me), I was wasting a second winter in

the solitude of the country. Before the winter ended, this sense of dejection, solitude, and simple boredom increased to such an extent that I refused to leave my room or open the piano or take up a book. When Kátya urged me to find some occupation, I said that I did not feel able for it; but in my heart I said, "What is the good of it? What is the good of doing anything, when the best part of my life is being wasted like this?" and to this question, tears were my only answer.

I was told that I was growing thin and losing my looks; but even this failed to interest me. What did it matter? For whom? I felt that my whole life was bound to go on in the same solitude and helpless dreariness, from which I had myself no strength and even no wish to escape. Towards the end of winter Kátya became anxious about me and determined to make an effort to take me abroad. But money was needed for this, and we hardly knew how our affairs stood after my mother's death. Our guardian, who was to come and clear up our position, was expected every day.

In March he arrived.

"Well, thank God!" Kátya said to me one day, when I was walking up and down the room like a shadow, without occupation, without a thought, and without a wish. "Sergéy Mikháylych has arrived; he has sent to inquire about us and means to come here for dinner. You must rouse yourself, dear Máshechka," she added, "or what will he think of you? He was so fond of you all."

Sergéy Mikháylych was our near neighbour, and, though a much younger man, had been a friend of my father's. His coming was likely to change our plans and to make it possible to leave the country; and also I had grown up in the habit of love and regard for him; and when Kátya begged me to rouse myself, she guessed rightly that it would give me especial pain to show to disadvantage before him, more than before any other of our friends. Like everyone in the house, from Kátya and his goddaughter Sónya down to the helper in the stables, I loved him from old habit; and also he had a special significance for me, owing to a remark which my mother had once made in my presence. "I should like you to marry a man like him," she said. At the time this seemed to me strange and even unpleasant. My ideal husband was quite different: he was to be thin, pale, and sad; and Sergéy Mikháylych was middle-aged, tall, robust, and always, as it seemed to me, in good spirits. But still my mother's words stuck in my head; and even six years before this time, when I was eleven, and he still said "thou" to me, and played with me, and called me by the pet-name of "violet"—even then I sometimes asked myself in a fright, "What *shall* I do, if he suddenly wants to

marry me?"

Before our dinner, to which Kátya made an addition of sweets and a dish of spinach, Sergéy Mikháylych arrived. From the window I watched him drive up to the house in a small sleigh; but as soon as it turned the corner, I hastened to the drawing room, meaning to pretend that his visit was a complete surprise. But when I heard his tramp and loud voice and Kátya's footsteps in the hall, I lost patience and went to meet him myself. He was holding Kátya's hand, talking loud, and smiling. When he saw me, he stopped and looked at me for a time without bowing. I was uncomfortable and felt myself blushing.

"Can this be really you?" he said in his plain decisive way, walking towards me with his arms apart. "Is so great a change possible? How grown-up you are! I used to call you 'violet,' but now you are a rose in full bloom!"

He took my hand in his own large hand and pressed it so hard that it almost hurt. Expecting him to kiss my hand, I bent towards him, but he only pressed it again and looked straight into my eyes with the old firmness and cheerfulness in his face.

It was six years since I had seen him last. He was much changed—older and darker in complexion; and he now wore whiskers which did not become him at all; but much remained the same—his simple manner, the large features of his honest open face, his bright intelligent eyes, his friendly, almost boyish, smile.

Five minutes later he had ceased to be a visitor and had become the friend of us all, even of the servants, whose visible eagerness to wait on him proved their pleasure at his arrival.

He behaved quite unlike the neighbours who had visited us after my mother's death. They had thought it necessary to be silent when they sat with us, and to shed tears. He, on the contrary, was cheerful and talkative, and said not a word about my mother, so that this indifference seemed strange to me at first and even improper on the part of so close a friend. But I understood later that what seemed indifference was sincerity, and I felt grateful for it. In the evening Kátya poured out tea, sitting in her old place in the drawing room, where she used to sit in my mother's lifetime; our old butler Grigóri had hunted out one of my father's pipes and brought it to him; and he began to walk up and down the room as he used to do in past days.

"How many terrible changes there are in this house, when one thinks of it all!" he said, stopping in his walk.

"Yes," said Kátya with a sigh; and then she put the lid on the samovar and looked at him, quite ready to burst out crying.

"I suppose you remember your father?" he said, turning to me.

"Not clearly," I answered.

"How happy you would have been together now!" he added in a low voice, looking thoughtfully at my face above the eyes. "I was very fond of him," he added in a still lower tone, and it seemed to me that his eyes were shining more than usual.

"And now God has taken her too!" said Kátya; and at once she laid her napkin on the teapot, took out her handkerchief, and began to cry.

"Yes, the changes in this house are terrible," he repeated, turning away. "Sónya, show me your toys," he added after a little and went off to the parlour. When he had gone, I looked at Kátya with eyes full of tears.

"What a splendid friend he is!" she said. And, though he was no relation, I did really feel a kind of warmth and comfort in the sympathy of this good man.

I could hear him moving about in the parlour with Sónya, and the sound of her high childish voice. I sent tea to him there; and I heard him sit down at the piano and strike the keys with Sónya's little hands.

Then his voice came—"Márya Alexándrovna, come here and play something."

I liked his easy behaviour to me and his friendly tone of command; I got up and went to him.

"Play this," he said, opening a book of Beethoven's music at the adagio of the *Moonlight Sonata*. "Let me hear how you play," he added, and went off to a corner of the room, carrying his cup with him.

I somehow felt that with him it was impossible to refuse or to say beforehand that I played badly: I sat down obediently at the piano and began to play as well as I could; yet I was afraid of criticism, because I knew that he understood and enjoyed music. The adagio suited the remembrance of past days evoked by our conversation at tea, and I believe that I played it fairly well. But he would not let me play the scherzo. "No," he said, coming up to me; "you don't play that right; don't go on; but the first movement was not bad; you seem to be musical." This moderate praise pleased me so much that I even reddened. I felt it pleasant and strange that a friend of my father's, and his contemporary, should no longer treat me like a child but speak to me seriously. Kátya now went upstairs to put Sónya to bed, and we were left alone in the parlour.

He talked to me about my father, and about the beginning of their friendship and the happy days they had spent together, while I was

still busy with lesson-books and toys; and his talk put my father before me in quite a new light, as a man of simple and delightful character. He asked me too about my tastes, what I read and what I intended to do, and gave me advice. The man of mirth and jest who used to tease me and make me toys had disappeared; here was a serious, simple, and affectionate friend, for whom I could not help feeling respect and sympathy. It was easy and pleasant to talk to him; and yet I felt an involuntary strain also. I was anxious about each word I spoke: I wished so much to earn for my own sake the love which had been given me already merely because I was my father's daughter.

After putting Sónya to bed, Kátya joined us and began to complain to him of my apathy, about which I had said nothing.

"So she never told me the most important thing of all!" he said, smiling and shaking his head reproachfully at me.

"Why tell you?" I said. "It is very tiresome to talk about, and it will pass off." (I really felt now, not only that my dejection would pass off, but that it had already passed off, or rather had never existed.)

"It is a bad thing," he said, "not to be able to stand solitude. Can it be that you are a young lady?"

"Of course, I am a young lady," I answered laughing.

"Well, I can't praise a young lady who is alive only when people are admiring her, but as soon as she is left alone, collapses and finds nothing to her taste—one who is all for show and has no resources in herself."

"You have a flattering opinion of me!" I said, just for the sake of saying something.

He was silent for a little. Then he said: "Yes; your likeness to your father means something. There is something in you … ," and his kind attentive look again flattered me and made me feel a pleasant embarrassment.

I noticed now for the first time that his face, which gave one at first the impression of high spirits, had also an expression peculiar to himself—bright at first and then more and more attentive and rather sad.

"You ought not to be bored and you cannot be," he said; "you have music, which you appreciate, books, study; your whole life lies before you, and now or never is the time to prepare for it and save yourself future regrets. A year hence it will be too late."

He spoke to me like a father or an uncle, and I felt that he kept a constant check upon himself, in order to keep on my level. Though I was hurt that he considered me as inferior to himself, I was pleased

that for me alone he thought it necessary to try to be different.

For the rest of the evening he talked about business with Kátya.

"Well, goodbye, dear friends," he said. Then he got up, came towards me and took my hand. "When shall we see you again?" asked Kátya.

"In spring," he answered, still holding my hand. "I shall go now to Danílovka" (this was another property of ours), "look into things there and make what arrangements I can; then I go to Moscow on business of my own; and in summer we shall meet again."

"Must you really be away so long?" I asked, and I felt terribly grieved. I had really hoped to see him every day, and I felt a sudden shock of regret, and a fear that my depression would return. And my face and voice just have made this plain.

"You must find more to do and not get depressed," he said; and I thought his tone too cool and unconcerned. "I shall put you through an examination in spring," he added, letting go my hand and not looking at me.

When we saw him off in the hall, he put on his fur coat in a hurry and still avoided looking at me. "He is taking a deal of trouble for nothing!" I thought. "Does he think me so anxious that he should look at me? He is a good man, a very good man; but that's all."

That evening, however, Kátya and I sat up late, talking, not about him but about our plans for the summer, and where we should spend next winter and what we should do then. I had ceased to ask that terrible question—what is the good of it all? Now it seemed quite plain and simple: the proper object of life was happiness, and I promised myself much happiness ahead. It seemed as if our gloomy old house had suddenly become fully of light and life.

II

Meanwhile spring arrived. My old dejection passed away and gave place to the unrest which spring brings with it, full of dreams and vague hopes and desires. Instead of living as I had done at the beginning of winter, I read and played the piano and gave lessons to Sónya; but also I often went into the garden and wandered for long alone through the avenues, or sat on a bench there; and Heaven knows what my thoughts and wishes and hopes were at such times. Sometimes at night, especially if there was a moon, I sat by my bedroom window till dawn; sometimes, when Kátya was not watching, I stole out into the garden wearing only a wrapper and ran through the dew as far as the

pond; and once I went all the say to the open fields and walked right round the garden alone at night.

I find it difficult now to recall and understand the dreams which then filled my imagination. Even when I *can* recall them, I find it hard to believe that my dreams were just like that: they were so strange and so remote from life. Sergéy Mikháylych kept his promise: he returned from his travels at the end of May. His first visit to us was in the evening and was quite unexpected. We were sitting in the veranda, preparing for tea. By this time the garden was all green, and the nightingales had taken up their quarters for the whole of St. Peter's Fast in the leafy borders. The tops of the round lilac bushes had a sprinkling of white and purple—a sign that their flowers were ready to open. The foliage of the birch avenue was all transparent in the light of the setting sun. In the veranda there was shade and freshness. The evening dew was sure to be heavy in the grass. Out of doors beyond the garden the last sounds of day were audible, and the noise of the sheep and cattle, as they were driven home. Níkon, the half-witted boy, was driving his water-cart along the path outside the veranda, and a cold stream of water from the sprinkler made dark circles on the mould round the stems and supports of the dahlias. In our veranda the polished samovar shone and hissed on the white tablecloth; there were cracknels and biscuits and cream on the table. Kátya was busy washing the cups with her plump hands. I was too hungry after bathing to wait for tea, and was eating bread with thick fresh cream. I was wearing a gingham blouse with loose sleeves, and my hair, still wet, was covered with a kerchief. Kátya saw him first, even before he came in.

"You, Sergéy Mikháylych!" she cried. "Why, we were just talking about you."

I got up, meaning to go and change my dress, but he caught me just by the door.

"Why stand on such ceremony in the country?" he said, looking with a smile at the kerchief on my head. "You don't mind the presence of your butler, and I am really the same to you as Grigóri is." But I felt just then that he was looking at me in a way quite unlike Grigóri's way, and I was uncomfortable.

"I shall come back at once," I said, as I left them.

"But what is wrong?" he called out after me; "it's just the dress of a young peasant woman."

"How strangely he looked at me!" I said to myself as I was quickly changing upstairs. "Well, I'm glad he has come; things will be more lively." After a look in the glass I ran gaily downstairs and into the

veranda; I was out of breath and did not disguise my haste. He was sitting at the table, talking to Kátya about our affairs. He glanced at me and smiled; then he went on talking. From what he said it appeared that our affairs were in capital shape: it was now possible for us, after spending the summer in the country, to go either to Petersburg for Sónya's education, or abroad.

"If only you would go abroad with us—" said Kátya; "without you we shall be quite lost there."

"Oh, I should like to go round the world with you," he said, half in jest and half in earnest.

"All right," I said; "let us start off and go round the world."

He smiled and shook his head.

"What about my mother? What about my business?" he said. "But that's not the question just now: I want to know how you have been spending your time. Not depressed again, I hope?"

When I told him that I had been busy and not bored during his absence, and when Kátya confirmed my report, he praised me as if he had a right to do so, and his words and looks were kind, as they might have been to a child. I felt obliged to tell him, in detail and with perfect frankness, all my good actions, and to confess, as if I were in church, all that he might disapprove of. The evening was so fine that we stayed in the veranda after tea was cleared away; and the conversation interested me so much that I did not notice how we ceased by degrees to hear any sound of the servants indoors. The scent of flowers grew stronger and came from all sides; the grass was drenched with dew; a nightingale struck up in a lilac bush close by and then stopped on hearing our voices; the starry sky seemed to come down lower over our heads.

It was growing dusk, but I did not notice it till a bat suddenly and silently flew in beneath the veranda awning and began to flutter round my white shawl. I shrank back against the wall and nearly cried out; but the bat as silently and swiftly dived out from under the awning and disappeared in the half-darkness of the garden.

"How fond I am of this place of yours!" he said, changing the conversation;

"I wish I could spend all my life here, sitting in this veranda."

"Well, do then!" said Kátya.

"That's all very well," he said, "but life won't sit still."

"Why don't you marry?" asked Kátya; "you would make an excellent husband."

"Because I like sitting still?" and he laughed. "No, Katerína Kárlovna, too late for you and me to marry. People have long ceased

to think of me as a marrying man, and I am even surer of it myself; and I declare I have felt quite comfortable since the matter was settled."

It seemed to me that he said this in an unnaturally persuasive way.

"Nonsense!" said Kátya; "a man of thirty-six makes out that he is too old!"

"Too old indeed," he went on, "when all one wants is to sit still. For a man who is going to marry that's not enough. Just you ask her," he added, nodding at me; "people of her age should marry, and you and I can rejoice in their happiness."

The sadness and constraint latent in his voice was not lost upon me. He was silent for a little, and neither Kátya nor I spoke.

"Well, just fancy," he went on, turning a little on his seat; "suppose that by some mischance I married a girl of seventeen, Másha, if you like—I mean, Márya Alexándrovna. The instance is good; I am glad it turned up; there could not be a better instance."

I laughed; but I could not understand why he was glad, or what it was that had turned up.

"Just tell me honestly, with your hand on your heart," he said, turning as if playfully to me, "would it not be a misfortune for you to unite your life with that of an old worn-out man who only wants to sit still, whereas Heaven knows what wishes are fermenting in that heart of yours?"

I felt uncomfortable and was silent, not knowing how to answer him.

"I am not making you a proposal, you know," he said, laughing; "but am I really the kind of husband you dream of when walking alone in the avenue at twilight? It would be a misfortune, would it not?"

"No, not a misfortune," I began.

"But a bad thing," he ended my sentence.

"Perhaps; but I may be mistaken …" He interrupted me again.

"There, you see! She is quite right, and I am grateful to her for her frankness, and very glad to have had this conversation. And there is something else to be said"—he added: "for me too it would be a very great misfortune."

"How odd you are! You have not changed in the least," said Kátya, and then left the veranda, to order supper to be served.

When she had gone, we were both silent and all was still around us, but for one exception. A nightingale, which had sung last night by fitful snatches, now flooded the garden with a steady stream of song, and was soon answered by another from the dell below, which had not sung till that evening. The nearer bird stopped and seemed to

listen for a moment, and then broke out again still louder than before, pouring out his song in piercing long drawn cadences. There was a regal calm in the birds' voices, as they floated through the realm of night which belongs to those birds and not to man. The gardener walked past to his sleeping-quarters in the greenhouse, and the noise of his heavy boots grew fainter and fainter along the path. Someone whistled twice sharply at the foot of the hill; and then all was still again. The rustling of leaves could just be heard; the veranda awning flapped; a faint perfume, floating in the air, came down on the veranda and filled it. I felt silence awkward after what had been said, but what to say I did not know. I looked at him. His eyes, bright in the half-darkness, turned towards me.

"How good life is!" he said.

I sighed, I don't know why.

"Well?" he asked.

"Life is good," I repeated after him.

Again we were silent, and again I felt uncomfortable. I could not help fancying that I had wounded him by agreeing that he was old; and I wished to comfort him but did not know how.

"Well, I must be saying goodbye," he said, rising; "my mother expects me for supper; I have hardly seen her all day."

"I meant to play you the new sonata," I said.

"That must wait," he replied; and I thought that he spoke coldly.

"Goodbye."

I felt still more certain that I had wounded him, and I was sorry. Kátya and I went to the steps to see him off and stood for a while in the open, looking along the road where he had disappeared from view. When we ceased to hear the sound of his horse's hoofs, I walked round the house to the veranda, and again sat looking into the garden; and all I wished to see and hear, I still saw and heard for a long time in the dewy mist filled with the sounds of night.

He came a second time, and a third; and the awkwardness arising from that strange conversation passed away entirely, never to return. During that whole summer he came two or three times a week; and I grew so accustomed to his presence, that, when he failed to come for some time, I missed him and felt angry with him, and thought he was behaving badly in deserting me. He treated me like a boy whose company he liked, asked me questions, invited the most cordial frankness on my part, gave me advice and encouragement, or sometimes scolded and checked me. But in spite of his constant effort to keep on my level, I was aware that behind the part of him which I could understand there

remained an entire region of mystery, into which he did not consider it necessary to admit me; and this fact did much to preserve my respect for him and his attraction for me. I knew from Kátya and from our neighbours that he had not only to care for his old mother with whom he lived, and to manage his own estate and our affairs, but was also responsible for some public business which was the source of serious worries; but what view he took of all this, what were his convictions, plans, and hopes, I could not in the least find out from him. Whenever I turned the conversation to his affairs, he frowned in a way peculiar to himself and seemed to imply, "Please stop! That is no business of yours;" and then he changed the subject. This hurt me at first; but I soon grew accustomed to confining our talk to my affairs, and felt this to be quite natural.

There was another thing which displeased me at first and then became pleasant to me. This was his complete indifference and even contempt for my personal appearance. Never by word or look did he imply that I was pretty; on the contrary, he frowned and laughed, whenever the word was applied to me in his presence. He even liked to find fault with my looks and tease me about them. On special days Kátya liked to dress me out in fine clothes and to arrange my hair effectively; but my finery met only with mockery from him, which pained kindhearted Kátya and at first disconcerted me. She had made up her mind that he admired me; and she could not understand how a man could help wishing a woman whom he admired to appear to the utmost advantage. But I soon understood what he wanted. He wished to make sure that I had not a trace of affectation. And when I understood this I was really quite free from affectation in the clothes I wore, or the arrangement of my hair, or my movements; but a very obvious form of affectation took its place—an affectation of simplicity, at a time when I could not yet be really simple. That he loved me, I knew; but I did not yet ask myself whether he loved me as a child or as a woman. I valued his love; I felt that he thought me better than all other young women in the world, and I could not help wishing him to go on being deceived about me. Without wishing to deceive him, I did deceive him, and I became better myself while deceiving him. I felt it a better and worthier course to show him to good points of my heart and mind than of my body. My hair, hands, face, ways—all these, whether good or bad, he had appraised at once and knew so well, that I could add nothing to my external appearance except the wish to deceive him. But my mind and heart he did not know, because he loved them, and because they were in the very process of growth and development; and

on this point I could and did deceive him. And how easy I felt in his company, once I understood this clearly! My causeless bashfulness and awkward movements completely disappeared. Whether he saw me from in front, or in profile, sitting or standing, with my hair up or my hair down, I felt that he knew me from head to foot, and I fancied, was satisfied with me as I was. If, contrary to his habit, he had suddenly said to me as other people did, that I had a pretty face, I believe that I should not have liked it at all. But, on the other hand, how light and happy my heart was when, after I had said something, he looked hard at me and said, hiding emotion under a mask of raillery:

"Yes, there *is* something in you! you are a fine girl—that I must tell you."

And for what did I receive such rewards, which filled my heart with pride and joy? Merely for saying that I felt for old Grigóri in his love for his little granddaughter; or because the reading of some poem or novel moved me to tears; or because I liked Mozart better than Schulhof. And I was surprised at my own quickness in guessing what was good and worthy of love, when I certainly did not know then what *was* good and worthy to be loved. Most of my former tastes and habits did not please him; and a mere look of his, or a twitch of his eyebrow was enough to show that he did not like what I was trying to say; and I felt at once that my own standard was changed. Sometimes, when he was about to give me a piece of advice, I seemed to know beforehand what he would say. When he looked in my face and asked me a question, his very look would draw out of me the answer he wanted. All my thoughts and feelings of that time were not really mine: they were his thoughts and feelings, which had suddenly become mine and passed into my life and lighted it up. Quite unconsciously I began to look at everything with different eyes—at Kátya and the servants and Sónya and myself and my occupations. Books, which I used to read merely to escape boredom, now became one of the chief pleasures of my life, merely because he brought me the books and we read and discussed them together. The lessons I gave to Sónya had been a burdensome obligation which I forced myself to go through from a sense of duty; but, after he was present at a lesson, it became a joy to me to watch Sónya's progress. It used to seem to me an impossibility to learn a whole piece of music by heart; but now, when I knew that he would hear it and might praise it, I would play a single movement forty times over without stopping, till poor Kátya stuffed her ears with cotton wool, while I was still not weary of it. The same old sonatas seemed quite different in the expression, and came out quite changed and much

improved. Even Kátya, whom I knew and loved like a second self, became different in my eyes. I now understood for the first time that she was not in the least bound to be the mother, friend, and slave that she was to us. Now I appreciated all the self-sacrifice and devotion of this affectionate creature, and all my obligations to her; and I began to love her even better. It was he too who taught me to take quite a new view of our serfs and servants and maids. It is an absurd confession to make—but I had spent seventeen years among these people and yet knew less about than about strangers whom I had never seen; it had never once occurred to me that they had their affections and wishes and sorrows, just as I had. Our garden and woods and fields which I had known so long, became suddenly new and beautiful to me. He was right in saying that the only certain happiness in life is to live for others. At the time his words seemed to me strange, and I did not understand them; but by degrees this became a conviction with me, without thinking about it. He revealed to me a whole new world of joys in the present, without changing anything in my life, without adding anything except himself to each impression in my mind. All that had surrounded me from childhood without saying anything to me, suddenly came to life. The mere sight of him made everything begin to speak and press for admittance to my heart, filling it with happiness.

Often during that summer, when I went upstairs to my room and lay down on my bed, the old unhappiness of spring with its desires and hopes for the future gave place to a passionate happiness in the present. Unable to sleep, I often got up and sat on Kátya's bed and told her how perfectly happy I was, though I now realize that this was quite unnecessary, as she could see it for herself. But when told me that she was quite content and perfectly happy, and kissed me. I believed her—it seemed to me so necessary and just that everyone should be happy. But Kátya could think of sleep too; and sometimes, pretending to be angry, she drove me from her bed and went to sleep, while I turned over and over in my mind all that made me so happy. Sometimes I got up and said my prayers over again, praying in my own words and thanking God for all the happiness he had given me.

All was quiet in the room; there was only the even breathing of Kátya in her sleep, and the ticking of the clock by her bed, while I turned from side to side and whispered words of prayer, or crossed myself and kissed the cross round my neck. The door was shut and the windows shuttered; perhaps a fly or gnat hung buzzing in the air. I felt a wish never to leave that room—a wish that dawn might never

come, that my present frame of mind might never change. I felt that my dreams and thoughts and prayers were live things, living there in the dark with me, hovering about my bed, and standing over me. And every thought was his thought, and every feeling his feeling. I did not know yet that this was love; I though that things might go on so forever, and that this feeling involved no consequences.

III

One day when the corn was being carried, I went with Kátya and Sónya to our favourite seat in the garden, in the shade of the lime trees and above the dell, beyond which the fields and woods lay open before us. It was three days since Sergéy Mikháylych had been to see us; we were expecting him, all the more because our bailiff reported that he had promised to visit the harvest field. At two o'clock we saw him ride on to the rye field. With a smile and a glance at me, Kátya ordered peaches and cherries, of which he was very fond, to be brought; then she lay down on the bench and began to doze. I tore off a crooked flat lime tree branch, which made my hand wet with its juicy leaves and juicy bark. Then I fanned Kátya with it and went on with my book, breaking off from time to time, to look at the field path along which he must come. Sónya was making a dolls' house at the root of an old lime tree. The day was sultry, windless, and steaming; the clouds were packing and growing blacker; all morning a thunderstorm had been gathering, and I felt restless, as I always did before thunder. But by afternoon the clouds began to part, the sun sailed out into a clear sky, and only in one quarter was there a faint fumbling. A single heavy cloud, lowering above the horizon and mingling with the dust from the fields, was rent from time to time by pale zigzags of lightning which ran down to the ground. It was clear that for today the storm would pass off, with us at all events. The road beyond the garden was visible in places, and we could see a procession of high creaking carts slowly moving along it with their load of sheaves, while the empty carts rattled at a faster pace to meet them, with swaying legs and shirts fluttering in them. The thick dust neither blew away nor settled down—it stood still beyond the fence, and we could see it through the transparent foliage of the garden trees. A little farther off, in the stackyard, the same voices and the same creaking of wheels were audible; and the same yellow sheaves that had moved slowly past the fence were now flying aloft, and I could see the oval stacks gradually rising higher, and their conspicuous pointed tops, and the labourers swarming upon

them. On the dusty field in front more carts were moving and more yellow sheaves were visible; and the noise of the carts, with the sound of talking and singing, came to us from a distance. At one side the bare stubble, with strips of fallow covered with wormwood, came more and more into view. Lower down, to the right, the gay dresses of the women were visible, as they bent down and swung their arms to bind the sheaves. Here the bare stubble looked untidy; but the disorder was cleared by degrees, as the pretty sheaves were ranged at close intervals. It seemed as if summer had suddenly turned to autumn before my eyes. The dust and heat were everywhere, except in our favourite nook in the garden; and everywhere, in this heat and dust and under the burning sun, the labourers carried on their heavy task with talk and noise.

Meanwhile Kátya slept so sweetly on our shady bench, beneath her white cambric handkerchief, the black juicy cherries glistened so temptingly on the plate, our dresses were so clean and fresh, the water in the jug was so bright with rainbow colours in the sun, and I felt so happy. "How can I help it?" I thought; "am I to blame for being happy? And how can I share my happiness? How and to whom can I surrender all myself and all my happiness?"

By this time the sun had sunk behind the tops of the birch avenue, the dust was settling on the fields, the distance became clearer and brighter in the slanting light. The clouds had dispersed altogether; I could see through the trees the thatch of three new corn stacks. The labourers came down off the stacks; the carts hurried past, evidently for the last time, with a loud noise of shouting; the women, with rakes over their shoulders and straw bands in their belts, walked home past us, singing loudly; and still there was no sign of Sergéy Mikháylych, though I had seen him ride down the hill long ago. Suddenly he appeared upon the avenue, coming from a quarter where I was not looking for him. He had walked round by the dell. He came quickly towards me, with his hat off and radiant with high spirits. Seeing that Kátya was asleep, he bit his lip, closed his eyes, and advanced on tiptoe; I saw at once that he was in that peculiar mood of causeless merriment which I always delighted to see in him, and which we called "wild ecstasy." He was just like a schoolboy playing truant; his whole figure, from head to foot, breathed content, happiness, and boyish frolic.

"Well, young violet, how are you? All right?" he said in a whisper, coming up to me and taking my hand. Then, in answer to my question, "Oh, I'm splendid today, I feel like a boy of thirteen—I want to play at horses and climb trees."

"Is it wild ecstasy?" I asked, looking into his laughing eyes, and

feeling that the "wild ecstasy" was infecting me.

"Yes," he answered, winking and checking a smile. "But I don't see why you need hit Kateřina Kárlovna on the nose."

With my eyes on him I had gone on waving the branch, without noticing that I had knocked the handkerchief off Kátya's face and was now brushing her with the leaves. I laughed.

"She will say she was awake all the time," I whispered, as if not to awake Kátya; but that was not my real reason—it was only that I liked to whisper to him.

He moved his lips in imitation of me, pretending that my voice was too low for him to hear. Catching sight of the dish of cherries, he pretended to steal it, and carried it off to Sónya under the lime tree, where he sat down on her dolls. Sónya was angry at first, but he soon made his peace with her by starting a game, to see which of them could eat cherries faster.

"If you like, I will send for more cherries," I said; "or let us go ourselves."

He took the dish and set the dolls on it, and we all three started for the orchard. Sónya ran behind us, laughing and pulling at his coat, to make him surrender the dolls. He gave them up and then turned to me, speaking more seriously.

"You really are a violet," he said, still speaking low, though there was no longer any fear of waking anybody; "when I came to you out of all that dust and heat and toil, I positively smelt violets at once. But not the sweet violet—you know, that early dark violet that smells of melting snow and spring grass."

"Is harvest going on well?" I asked, in order to hide the happy agitation which his words produced in me.

"First rate! Our people are always splendid. The more you know them, the better you like them."

"Yes," I said; "before you came I was watching them from the garden, and suddenly I felt ashamed to be so comfortable myself while they were hard at work, and so …"

He interrupted me, with a kind but grave look: "Don't talk like that, my dear; it is too sacred a matter to talk of lightly. God forbid that you should use fine phrases about that!"

"But it is only to *you* I say this."

"All right, I understand. But what about those cherries?"

The orchard was locked, and no gardener to be seen: he had sent them all off to help with the harvest. Sónya ran to fetch the key. But he would not wait for her: climbing up a corner of the wall, he raised

the net and jumped down on the other side.

His voice came over the wall—"If you want some, give me the dish."

"No," I said; "I want to pick for myself. I shall fetch the key; Sónya won't find it."

But suddenly I felt that I must see what he was doing there and what he looked like—that I must watch his movements while he supposed that no one saw him. Besides I was simply unwilling just then to lose sight of him for a single minute. Running on tiptoe through the nettles to the other side of the orchard where the wall was lower, I mounted on an empty cask, till the top of the wall was on a level with my waist, and then leaned over into the orchard. I looked at the gnarled old trees, with their broad dented leaves and the ripe black cherries hanging straight and heavy among the foliage; then I pushed my head under the net, and from under the knotted bough of an old cherry tree I caught sight of Sergéy Mikháylych. He evidently thought that I had gone away and that no one was watching him. With his hat off and his eyes shut, he was sitting on the fork of an old tree and carefully rolling into a ball a lump of cherry tree gum. Suddenly he shrugged his shoulders, opened his eyes, muttered something, and smiled. Both words and smile were so unlike him that I felt ashamed of myself for eavesdropping. It seemed to me that he had said, "Másha!" "Impossible," I thought. "Darling Másha!" he said again, in a lower and more tender tone. There was possible doubt about the two words this time. My heart beat hard, and such a passionate joy—illicit joy, as I felt—took hold of me, that I clutched at the wall, fearing to fall and betray myself. Startled by the sound of my movement, he looked round—he dropped his eyes instantly, and his face turned red, even scarlet, like a child's. He tried to speak, but in vain; again and again his face positively flamed up. Still he smiled as he looked at me, and I smiled too. Then his whole face grew radiant with happiness. He had ceased to be the old uncle who spoiled or scolded me; he was a man on my level, who loved and feared me as I loved and feared him. We looked at one another without speaking. But suddenly he frowned; the smile and light in his eyes disappeared, and he resumed his cold paternal tone, just as if we were doing something wrong and he was repenting and calling on me to repent.

"You had better get down, or you will hurt yourself," he said; "and do put your hair straight; just think what you look like?"

"What makes him pretend? what makes him want to give me pain?" I thought in my vexation. And the same instant brought an irresistible desire to upset his composure again and test my power over him.

"No," I said; "I mean to pick for myself." I caught hold of the nearest branch and climbed to the top of the wall; then, before he had time to catch me, I jumped down on the other side.

"What foolish things you do!" he muttered, flushing again and trying to hide his confusion under a pretence of annoyance; "you might really have hurt yourself. But how do you mean to get out of this?"

He was even more confused than before, but this time his confusion frightened rather than pleased me. It infected me too and made me blush; avoiding his eye and not knowing what to say, I began to pick cherries though I had nothing to put them in. I reproached myself, I repented of what I had done, I was frightened; I felt that I had lost his good opinion forever by my folly. Both of us were silent and embarrassed. From this difficult situation Sónya rescued us by running back with the key in her hand. For some time we both addressed our conversation to her and said nothing to each other. When we returned to Kátya, who assured us that she had never been asleep and was listening all the time, I calmed down, and he tried to drop into his fatherly patronizing manner again, but I was not taken in by it. A discussion which we had had some days before came back clear before me.

Kátya had been saying that it was easier for a man to be in love and declare his love than for a woman.

"A man may say that he is in love, and a woman can't," she said.

"I disagree," said he; "a man has no business to say, and can't say that he is in love."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because it never can be true. What sort of a revelation is that, that a man is in love? A man seems to think that whenever he says the word, something will go pop!—that some miracle will be worked, signs and wonders, with all the big guns firing at once! In my opinion," he went on, "whoever solemnly brings out the words 'I love you' is either deceiving himself or, which is even worse, deceiving others."

"Then how is a woman to know that a man is in love with her, unless he tells her?" asked Kátya.

"That I don't know," he answered; "every man has his own way of telling things. If the feeling exists, it will out somehow. But when I read novels, I always fancy the crestfallen look of Lieut. Strélsky or Alfred, when he says, 'I love you, Eleanora,' and expects something wonderful to happen at once, and no change at all takes place in either of them—their eyes and their noses and their whole selves remain exactly as they were."

Even then I had felt that this banter covered something serious that had reference to myself. But Kátya resented his disrespectful treatment of the heroes in novels.

"You are never serious," she said; "but tell me truthfully, have you never yourself told a woman that you loved her?"

"Never, and never gone down on one knee," he answered, laughing; "and never will."

This conversation I now recalled, and I reflected that there was no need for him to tell me that he loved me. "I know that he loves me," I thought, "and all his endeavours to seem indifferent will not change my opinion."

He said little to me throughout the evening, but in every word he said to Kátya and Sónya and in every look and movement of his I saw love and felt no doubt of it. I was only vexed and sorry for him, that he thought it necessary still to hide his feelings and pretend coldness, when it was all so clear, and when it would have been so simple and easy to be boundlessly happy. But my jumping down to him in the orchard weighed on me like a crime. I kept feeling that he would cease to respect me and was angry with me.

After tea I went to the piano, and he followed me.

"Play me something—it is long since I heard you," he said, catching me up in the parlour.

"I was just going to," I said. Then I looked straight in his face and said quickly, "Sergéy Mikháylych, you are not angry with me, are you?"

"What for?" he asked.

"For not obeying you this afternoon," I said, blushing.

He understood me: he shook his head and made a grimace, which implied that I deserved a scolding but that he did not feel able to give it.

"So it's all right, and we are friends again?" I said, sitting down at the piano.

"Of course!" he said.

In the drawing room, a large lofty room, there were only two lighted candles on the piano, the rest of the room remaining in half-darkness. Outside the open windows the summer night was bright. All was silent, except when the sound of Kátya's footsteps in the unlighted parlour was heard occasionally, or when his horse, which was tied up under the window, snorted or stamped his hoof on the burdocks that grew there. He sat behind me, where I could not see him; but everywhere—in the half-darkness of the room, in every sound, in myself—I felt his

presence. Every look, every movement of his, though I could not see them, found an echo in my heart. I played a sonata of Mozart's which he had brought me and which I had learnt in his presence and for him. I was not thinking at all of what I was playing, but I believe that I played it well, and I thought that he was pleased. I was conscious of his pleasure, and conscious too, though I never looked at him, of the gaze fixed on me from behind. Still moving my fingers mechanically. I turned round quite involuntarily and looked at him. The night had grown brighter, and his head stood out on a background of darkness. He was sitting with his head propped on his hands, and his eyes shone as they gazed at me. Catching his look, I smiled and stopped playing. He smiled too and shook his head reproachfully at the music, for me to go on. When I stopped, the moon had grown brighter and was riding high in the heavens; and the faint light of the candles was supplemented by a new silvery light which came in through the windows and fell on the floor. Kátya called out that it was really too bad—that I had stopped at the best part of the piece, and that I was playing badly. But he declared that I had never played so well; and then he began to walk about the rooms—through the drawing room to the unlighted parlour and back again to the drawing room, and each time he looked at me and smiled. I smiled too; I wanted even to laugh with no reason; I was so happy at something that had happened that very day. Kátya and I were standing by the piano; and each time that he vanished through the drawing room door, I started kissing her in my favourite place, the soft part of her neck under the chin; and each time he came back, I made a solemn face and refrained with difficulty from laughing.

"What is the matter with her today?" Kátya asked him.

He only smiled at me without answering; he knew what was the matter with me.

"Just look what a night it is!" he called out from the parlour, where he had stopped by the open French window looking into the garden.

We joined him; and it really was such a night as I have never seen since. The full moon shone above the house and behind us, so that we could not see it, and half the shadow, thrown by the roof and pillars of the house and by the veranda awning, lay slanting and foreshortened on the gravel path and the strip of turf beyond. Everything else was bright and saturated with the silver of the dew and the moonlight. The broad garden path, on one side of which the shadows of the dahlias and their supports lay aslant, all bright and cold, and shining on the inequalities of the gravel, ran on till it vanished in the mist. Through the trees the roof of the greenhouse shone bright, and a growing mist rose from the

dell. The lilac bushes, already partly leafless, were all bright to the centre. Each flower was distinguishable apart, and all were drenched with dew. In the avenues light and shade were so mingled that they looked, not like paths and trees but like transparent houses, swaying and moving. To our right, in the shadow of the house, everything was black, indistinguishable, and uncanny. But all the brighter for the surrounding darkness was the top of a poplar, with a fantastic crown of leaves, which for some strange reason remained there close to the house, towering into the bright light, instead of flying away into the dim distance, into the retreating dark blue of the sky.

"Let us go for a walk," I said.

Kátya agreed, but said I must put on galoshes.

"I don't want them, Kátya," I said; "Sergéy Mikháylych will give me his arm."

As if that would prevent me from wetting my feet! But to us three this seemed perfectly natural at the time. Though he never used to offer me his arm, I now took it of my own accord, and he saw nothing strange in it. We all went down from the veranda together. That whole world, that sky, that garden, that air, were different from those that I knew.

We were walking along an avenue, and it seemed to me, whenever I looked ahead, that we could go no farther in the same direction, that the world of the possible ended there, and that the whole scene must remain fixed forever in its beauty. But we still moved on, and the magic wall kept parting to let us in; and still we found the familiar garden with trees and paths and withered leaves. And we were really walking along the paths, treading on patches of light and shade; and a withered leaf was really crackling under my foot, and a live twig brushing my face. And that was really he, walking steadily and slowly at my side, and carefully supporting my arm; and that was really Kátya walking beside us with her creaking shoes. And that must be the moon in the sky, shining down on us through the motionless branches.

But at each step the magic wall closed up again behind us and in front, and I ceased to believe in the possibility of advancing father—I ceased to believe in the reality of it all.

"Oh, there's a frog!" cried Kátya.

"Who said that? and why?" I thought. But then I realized it was Kátya, and that she was afraid of frogs. Then I looked at the ground and saw a little frog which gave a jump and then stood still in front of me, while its tiny shadow was reflected on the shining clay of the path.

"You're not afraid of frogs, are you?" he asked.

I turned and looked at him. Just where we were there was a gap of one tree in the lime avenue, and I could see his face clearly—it was so handsome and so happy!

Though he had spoken of my fear of frogs, I knew that he meant to say, "I love you, my dear one!" "I love you, I love you" was repeated by his look, by his arm; by the light, the shadow, and the air all repeated the same words.

We had gone all round the garden. Kátya's short steps had kept up with us, but now she was tired and out of breath. She said it was time to go in; and I felt very sorry for her. "Poor thing!" I thought; "why does not she feel as we do? why are we not all young and happy, like this night and like him and me?"

We went in, but it was a long time before he went away, though the cocks had crowed, and everyone in the house was asleep, and his horse, tethered under the window, snorted continually and stamped his hoof on the burdocks. Kátya never reminded us of the hour, and we sat on talking of the merest trifles and not thinking of the time, till it was past two. The cocks were crowing for the third time and the dawn was breaking when he rode away. He said goodbye as usual and made no special allusion; but I knew that from that day he was mine, and that I should never lose him now. As soon as I had confessed to myself that I loved him, I took Kátya into my confidence. She rejoiced in the news as was touched by my telling her; but she was actually able—poor thing!—to go to bed and sleep! For me, I walked for a long, long time about the veranda; then I went down to the garden where, recalling each word, each movement, I walked along the same avenues through which I had walked with him. I did not sleep at all that night, and saw sunrise and early dawn for the first time in my life. And never again did I see such a night and such a morning. "Only why does he not tell me plainly that he loves me?" I thought; "what makes him invent obstacles and call himself old, when all is so simple and so splendid? What makes him waste this golden time which may never return? Let him say 'I love you'—say it in plain words; let him take my hand in his and bend over it and say 'I love you.' Let him blush and look down before me; and then I will tell him all. No! not tell him, but throw my arms round him and press close to him and weep." But then a thought came to me—"What if I am mistaken and he does not love me?"

I was startled by this fear—God knows where it might have led me. I recalled his embarrassment and mine, when I jumped down to him in the orchard; and my heart grew very heavy. Tears gushed from my

eyes, and I began to pray. A strange thought occurred too me, calming me and bringing hope with it. I resolved to begin fasting on that day, to take the Communion on my birthday, and on that same day to be betrothed to him.

How this result would come to pass I had no idea; but from that moment I believed and felt sure it would be so. The dawn had fully come and the labourers were getting up when I went back to my room.

IV

The Fast of the Assumption falling in August, no one in the house was surprised by my intention of fasting.

During the whole of the week he never once came to see us; but, far from being surprised or vexed or made uneasy by his absence, I was glad of it—I did not expect him until my birthday. Each day during the week I got up early. While the horses were being harnessed, I walked in the garden alone, turning over in my mind the sins of the day before, and considering what I must do today, so as to be satisfied with my day and not spoil it by a single sin. It seemed so easy to me then to abstain from sin altogether; only a trifling effort seemed necessary. When the horses came round, I got into the carriage with Kátya or one of the maids, and we drove to the church two miles away. While entering the church, I always recalled the prayer for those who "come unto the Temple in the fear of God," and tried to get just that frame of mind when mounting the two grass-grown steps up to the building. At that hour there were not more than a dozen worshippers—household servants or peasant women keeping the Fast. They bowed to me, and I returned their bows with studied humility. Then, with what seemed to me a great effort of courage, I went myself and got candles from the man who kept them, an old soldier and an Elder; and I placed the candles before the icons. Through the central door of the altar-screen I could see the altar cloth which my mother had worked; on the screen were the two angels which had seemed so big to me when I was little, and the dove with a golden halo which had fascinated me long ago. Behind the choir stood the old battered font, where I had been christened myself and stood godmother to so many of the servants' children. The old priest came out, wearing a cope made of the pall that had covered my father's coffin, and began to read in the same voice that I had heard all my life—at services held in our house, at Sónya's christening, at memorial services for my father, and at my mother's funeral. The same old quavering voice of the deacon rose in the choir;

and the same old woman, whom I could remember at every service in that church, crouched by the wall, fixing her streaming eyes on an icon in the choir, pressing her folded fingers against her faded kerchief, and muttering with her toothless gums. And these objects were no longer merely curious to me, merely interesting from old recollections—each had become important and sacred in my eyes and seemed charged with profound meaning. I listened to each word of the prayers and tried to suit my feeling to it; and if I failed to understand, I prayed silently that God would enlighten me, or made up a prayer of my own in place of what I had failed to catch. When the penitential prayers were repeated, I recalled my past life, and that innocent childish past seemed to me so black when compared to the present brightness of my soul, that I wept and was horrified at myself; but I felt too that all those sins would be forgiven, and that if my sins had been even greater, my repentance would be all the sweeter. At the end of the service when the priest said, "The blessing of the Lord be upon you!" I seemed to feel an immediate sensation of physical well-being, of a mysterious light and warmth that instantly filled my heart. The service over, the priest came and asked me whether he should come to our house to say Mass, and what hour would suit me; and I thanked him for the suggestion, intended, as I thought, to please me, but said that I would come to church instead, walking or driving.

"Is that not too much trouble?" he asked. And I was at a loss for an answer, fearing to commit a sin of pride.

After the Mass, if Kátya was not with me, I always sent the carriage home and walked back alone, bowing humbly to all who passed, and trying to find an opportunity of giving help or advice. I was eager to sacrifice myself for someone, to help in lifting a fallen cart, to rock a child's cradle, to give up the path to others by stepping into the mud. One evening I heard the bailiff report to Kátya that Simon, one of our serfs, had come to beg some boards to make a coffin for his daughter, and a rouble to pay the priest for the funeral; the bailiff had given what he asked. "Are they as poor as that?" I asked. "Very poor, Miss," the bailiff answered; "they have no salt to their food." My heart ached to hear this, and yet I felt a kind of pleasure too. Pretending to Kátya that I was merely going for a walk, I ran upstairs, got out all my money (it was very little but it was all I had), crossed myself, and started off alone, through the veranda and the garden, on my way to Simon's hut. It stood at the end of the village, and no one saw me as I went up to the window, placed the money on the sill, and tapped on the pane. Someone came out, making the door creak, and hailed me; but I

hurried home, cold and shaking with fear like a criminal. Kátya asked where I had been and what was the matter with me; but I did not answer, and did not even understand what she was saying. Everything suddenly seemed to me so petty and insignificant. I locked myself up in my own room, and walked up and down alone for a long time, unable to do anything, unable to think, unable to understand my own feelings. I thought of the joy of the whole family, and of what they would say of their benefactor; and I felt sorry that I had not given them the money myself. I thought too of what Sergéy Mikháylych would say, if he knew what I had done; and I was glad to think that no one would ever find out. I was so happy, and I felt myself and everyone else so bad, and yet was so kindly disposed to myself and to all the world, that the thought of death came to me as a dream of happiness. I smiled and prayed and wept, and felt at that moment a burning passion of love for all the world, myself included. Between services I used to read the Gospel; and the book became more and more intelligible to me, and the story of that divine life simpler and more touching; and the depths of thought and feeling I found in studying it became more awful and impenetrable. On the other hand, how clear and simple everything seemed to me when I rose from the study of this book and looked again on life around me and reflected on it! It was so difficult, I felt, to lead a bad life, and so simple to love everyone and be loved. All were so kind and gentle to me; even Sónya, whose lessons I had not broken off, was quite different—trying to understand and please me and not to vex me. Everyone treated me as I treated them. Thinking over my enemies, of whom I must ask pardon before confession, I could only remember one—one of our neighbours, a girl whom I had made fun of in company a year ago, and who had ceased to visit us. I wrote to her, confessing my fault and asking her forgiveness. She replied that she forgave me and wished me to forgive her. I cried for joy over her simple words, and saw in them, at the time, a deep and touching feeling. My old nurse cried, when I asked her to forgive me. "What makes them all so kind to me? what have I done to deserve their love?" I asked myself. Sergéy Mikháylych would come into my mind, and I thought for long about him. I could not help it, and I did not consider these thoughts sinful. But my thoughts of him were quite different from what they had been on the night when I first realized that I loved him: he seemed to me now like a second self, and became a part of every plan for the future. The inferiority which I had always felt in his presence had vanished entirely: I felt myself his equal and could understand him thoroughly from the moral elevation I had reached. What had seemed

strange in him was now quite clear to me. Now I could see what he meant by saying to live for others was the only true happiness, and I agreed with him perfectly. I believed that our life together would be endlessly happy and untroubled. I looked forward, not to foreign tours or fashionable society or display, but to a quite different scene—a quiet family life in the country, with constant self-sacrifice, constant mutual love, and constant recognition in all things of the kind hand of Providence.

I carried out my plan of taking the Communion on my birthday. When I came back from church that day, my heart was so swelling with happiness that I was afraid of life, afraid of any feeling that might break in on that happiness. We had hardly left the carriage for the steps in front of the house, when there was a sound of wheels on the bridge, and I saw Sergéy Mikháylych drive up in his well-known trap. He congratulated me,[1] and we went together to the parlour. Never since I had known him had I been so much at my ease with him and so self-possessed as on that morning. I felt in myself a whole new world out of his reach and beyond his comprehension. I was not conscious of the slightest embarrassment in speaking to him. He must have understood the cause of this feeling; for he was tender and gentle beyond his wont and showed a kind of reverent consideration for me. When I made for the piano, he locked it and put the key in his pocket.

"Don't spoil your present mood," he said, "you have the sweetest of all music in your soul just now."

I was grateful for his words, and yet I was not quite pleased at his understanding too easily and clearly what ought to have been an exclusive secret in my heart. At dinner he said that he had come to congratulate me and also to say goodbye; for he must go to Moscow tomorrow. He looked at Kátya as he spoke; but then he stole a glance at me, and I saw that he was afraid he might detect signs of emotion on my face. But I was neither surprised nor agitated; I did not even ask whether he would be long away. I knew he would say this, and I knew that he would not go. How did I know? I cannot explain that to myself now; but on that memorable day it seemed that I knew everything that had been and that would be. It was like a delightful dream, when all that happens seems to have happened already and to be quite familiar, and it will all happen over again, and one knows that it will happen.

He meant to go away immediately after dinner; but, as Kátya was

[1] It is the custom in Russia to congratulate anyone on his or her birthday, and also on receiving Communion.

tired after church and went to lie down for a little, he had to wait until she woke up in order to say goodbye to her. The sun shone into the drawing room, and we went out to the veranda. When we were seated, I began at once, quite calmly, the conversation that was bound to fix the fate of my heart. I began to speak, no sooner and no later, but at the very moment when we sat down, before our talk had taken any turn or colour that might have hindered me from saying what I meant to say. I cannot tell myself where it came from—my coolness and determination and preciseness of expression. It was if something independent of my will was speaking through my lips. He sat opposite me with his elbows resting on the rails of the veranda; he pulled a lilac-branch towards him and stripped the leaves off it. When I began to speak, he let go the branch and leaned his head on one hand. His attitude might have shown either perfect calmness or strong emotion.

"Why are you going?" I asked, significantly, deliberately, and looking straight at him.

He did not answer at once.

"Business!" he muttered at last and dropped his eyes.

I realized how difficult he found it to lie to me, and in reply to such a frank question.

"Listen," I said; "you know what today is to me, how important for many reasons. If I question you, it is not to show an interest in your doings (you know that I have become intimate with you and fond of you)—I ask you this question, because I *must* know the answer. Why are you going?"

"It is very hard for me to tell you the true reason," he said. "During this week I have thought much about you and about myself, and have decided that I must go. You understand why; and if you care for me, you will ask no questions." He put up a hand to rub his forehead and cover his eyes. "I find it very difficult … But you will understand."

My heart began to beat fast.

"I cannot understand you," I said; "I *cannot! you* must tell me; in God's name and for the sake of this day tell me what you please, and I shall hear it with calmness," I said.

He changed his position, glanced at me, and again drew the lilac-twig towards him.

"Well!" he said, after a short silence and in a voice that tried in vain to seem steady, "it's a foolish business and impossible to put into words, and I feel the difficulty, but I will try to explain it to you," he added, frowning as if in bodily pain.

"Well?" I said.

"Just imagine the existence of a man—let us call him A—who has left youth far behind, and of a woman whom we may call B, who is young and happy and has seen nothing as yet of life or of the world. Family circumstances of various kinds brought them together, and he grew to love her as a daughter, and had no fear that his love would change its nature."

He stopped, but I did not interrupt him.

"But he forgot that B was so young, that life was still all a May-game to her," he went on with a sudden swiftness and determination and without looking at me, "and that it was easy to fall in love with her in a different way, and that this would amuse her. He made a mistake and was suddenly aware of another feeling, as heavy as remorse, making its way into his heart, and he was afraid. He was afraid that their old friendly relations would be destroyed, and he made up his mind to go away before that happened." As he said this, he began again to rub his eyes with a pretence of indifference, and to close them.

"Why was he afraid to love differently?" I asked very low; but I restrained my emotion and spoke in an even voice. He evidently thought that I was not serious; for he answered as if he were hurt.

"You are young, and I am not young. You want amusement, and I want something different. Amuse yourself, if you like, but not with me. If you do, I shall take it seriously; and then I shall be unhappy, and you will repent. That is what A said," he added; "however, this is all nonsense; but you understand why I am going. And don't let us continue this conversation. Please not!"

"No! no!" I said, "we must continue it," and tears began to tremble in my voice. "Did he lover her, or not?"

He did not answer.

"If he did not love her, why did he treat her as a child and pretend to love her?" I asked.

"Yes, A behaved badly," he interrupted me quickly; "but it all came to an end and they parted friends."

"This is horrible! Is there no other ending?" I said with a great effort and then felt afraid of what I had said.

"Yes, there is," he said, showing a face full of emotion and looking straight at me. "There are two different endings. But, for God's sake, listen to me quietly and don't interrupt. Some say"—here he stood up and smiled with a smile that was heavy with pain—"some say that A went off his head, fell passionately in love with B, and told her so. But she only laughed. To her it was all a jest, but to him a matter of life and death."

I shuddered and tried to interrupt him—tried to say that he must not dare to speak for me; but he checked me, laying his hand on mine.

"Wait!" he said, and his voice shook. "The other story is that she took pity on him, and fancied, poor child, from her ignorance of the world, that she really could love him, and so consented to be his wife. And he, in his madness, believed it—believed that his whole life could begin anew; but she saw herself that she had deceived him and that he had deceived her. … But let us drop the subject finally," he ended, clearly unable to say more; and then he began to walk up and down in silence before me.

Thought he had asked that subject should be dropped, I saw that his whole soul was hanging on my answer. I tried to speak, but the pain at my heart kept me dumb. I glanced at him—he was pale and his lower lip trembled. I felt sorry for him. With a sudden effort I broke the bonds of silence which had held me fast, and began to speak in a low inward voice, which I feared would break every moment.

"There is a third ending to the story," I said, and then paused, but he said nothing; "the third ending is that he did not love her, but hurt her, hurt her, and thought that he was right; and he left her and was actually proud of himself. You have been pretending, not I; I have loved you since the first day we met, loved you," I repeated, and at the word "loved" my low inward voice changed, without intention of mine, to a wild cry which frightened me myself.

He stood pale before me, his lip trembled more and more violently, and two tears came out upon his cheeks.

"It is wrong!" I almost screamed, feeling that I was choking with angry unshed tears. "Why do you do it?" I cried and got up to leave him.

But he would not let me go. His head was resting on my knees, his lips were kissing my still trembling hands, and his tears were wetting them. "My God! if I had only known!" he whispered.

"Why? why?" I kept on repeating, but in my heart there was happiness, happiness which had now come back, after so nearly departing forever.

Five minutes later Sónya was rushing upstairs to Kátya and proclaiming all over the house that Másha intended to marry Sergéy Mikháylych.

V

There were no reasons for putting off our wedding, and neither he nor I wished for delay. Kátya, it is true, thought we ought to go to Moscow, to buy and order wedding clothes; and his mother tried to insist that, before the wedding, he must set up a new carriage, buy new furniture, and repaper the whole house. But we two together carried our point, that all these things, if they were really indispensable, should be done afterwards, and that we should be married within a fortnight after my birthday, quietly, without wedding clothes, with a party, without best men and supper and champagne, and all the other conventional features of a wedding. He told me how dissatisfied his mother was that there should be no band, no mountain of luggage, no renovation of the whole house—so unlike her own marriage which had cost thirty thousand roubles; and he told of the solemn and secret confabulations which she held in her store room with her housekeeper, Maryúshka, rummaging the chests and discussing carpets, curtains, and salvers as indispensable conditions of our happiness. At our house Kátya did just the same with my old nurse, Kuzmínichna. It was impossible to treat the matter lightly with Kátya. She was firmly convinced that he and I, when discussing our future, were merely talking the sentimental nonsense natural to people in our position; and that our real future happiness depended on the hemming of tablecloths and napkins and the proper cutting out and stitching of underclothing. Several times a day secret information passed between the two houses, to communicate what was going forward in each; and though the external relations between Kátya and his mother were most affectionate, yet a slightly hostile though very subtle diplomacy was already perceptible in their dealings. I now became more intimate with Tatyána Semënovna, the mother of Sergéy Mikháylych, an old-fashioned lady, strict and formal in the management of her household. Her son loved her, and not merely because she was his mother: he thought her the best, cleverest, kindest, and most affectionate woman in the world. She was always kind to us and to me especially, and was glad that her son should be getting married; but when I was with her after our engagement, I always felt that she wished me to understand that, in her opinion, her son might have looked higher, and that it would be as well for me to keep that in mind. I understood her meaning perfectly and thought her quite right.

During that fortnight he and I met every day. He came to dinner regularly and stayed on till midnight. But though he said—and I knew

he was speaking the truth—that he had no life apart from me, yet he never spent the whole day with me, and tried to go on with his ordinary occupations. Our outward relations remained unchanged to the very day of our marriage: we went on saying "you" and not "thou" to each other; he did not even kiss my hand; he did not seek, but even avoided, opportunities of being alone with me. It was as if he feared to yield to the harmful excess of tenderness he felt. I don't know which of us had changed; but I now felt myself entirely his equal; I no longer found in him the pretence of simplicity which had displeased me earlier; and I often delighted to see in him, not a grown man inspiring respect and awe but a loving and wildly happy child. "How mistaken I was about him!" I often thought; "he is just such another human being as myself!" It seemed to me now, that his whole character was before me and that I thoroughly understood it. And how simple was every feature of his character, and how congenial to my own! Even his plans for our future life together were just my plans, only more clearly and better expressed in his words.

The weather was bad just then, and we spent most of our time indoors. The corner between the piano and the window was the scene of our best intimate talks. The candlelight was reflected on the blackness of the window near us; from time to time drops struck the glistening pane and rolled down. The rain pattered on the roof; the water splashed in a puddle under the spout; it felt damp near the window; but our corner seemed all the brighter and warmer and happier for that.

"Do you know, there is something I have long wished to say to you," he began one night when we were sitting up late in our corner; "I was thinking of it all the time you were playing."

"Don't say it, I know all about it," I replied.

"All right! mum's the word!"

"No! what is it?" I asked.

"Well, it is this. You remember the story I told you about A and B?"

"I should just think I did! What a stupid story! Lucky that it ended as it did!"

"Yes. I was very near destroying my happiness by my own act. You saved me. But the main thing is that I was always telling lies then, and I'm ashamed of it, and I want to have my say out now."

"Please don't! you really mustn't!"

"Don't be frightened," he said, smiling. "I only want to justify myself. When I began then, I meant to argue."

"It is always a mistake to argue," I said.

"Yes, I argued wrong. After all my disappointments and mistakes in life, I told myself firmly when I came to the country this year, that love was no more for me, and that all I had to do was to grow old decently. So for a long time, I was unable to clear up my feeling towards you, or to make out where it might lead me. I hoped, and I didn't hope: at one time I thought you were trifling with me; at another I felt sure of you but could not decide what to do. But after that evening, you remember when we walked in the garden at night, I got alarmed: the present happiness seemed too great to be real. What if I allowed myself to hope and then failed? But of course I was thinking only of myself, for I am disgustingly selfish."

He stopped and looked at me.

"But it was not all nonsense that I said then. It was possible and right for me to have fears. I take so much from you and can give so little. You are still a child, a bud that has yet to open; you have never been in love before, and I …"

"Yes, do tell me the truth … ," I began, and then stopped, afraid of his answer. "No, never mind," I added.

"Have I been in love before? is that it?" he said, guessing my thoughts at once. "That I can tell you. No, never before—nothing at all like what I feel now." But a sudden painful recollection seemed to flash across his mind. "No," he said sadly; "in this too I need your compassion, in order to have the right to love you. Well, was I not bound to think twice before saying that I loved you? What do I give you? love, no doubt."

"And is that little?" I asked, looking him in the face.

"Yes, my dear, it is little to give *you*," he continued; "you have youth and beauty. I often lie awake at night from happiness, and all the time I think of our future life together. I have lived through much, and now I think I have found what is needed for happiness. A quiet secluded life in the country, with the possibility of being useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them; then work which one hopes may be of some use; then rest, nature, books, music, love for one's neighbour—such is my idea of happiness. And then, on the top of all that, you for a mate, and children perhaps—what more can the heart of man desire?"

"It should be enough," I said.

"Enough for me whose youth is over," he went on, "but not for you. Life is still before you, and you will perhaps seek happiness, and perhaps find it, in something different. You think now that this is

happiness, because you love me."

"You are wrong," I said; "I have always desired just that quiet domestic life and prized it. And you only say just what I have thought."

He smiled.

"So you think, my dear; but that is not enough for you. You have youth and beauty," he repeated thoughtfully.

But I was angry because he disbelieved me and seemed to cast my youth and beauty in my teeth.

"Why do you love me then?" I asked angrily; "for my youth or for myself?"

"I don't know, but I love you," he answered, looking at me with his attentive and attractive gaze.

I did not reply and involuntarily looked into his eyes. Suddenly a strange thing happened to me: first I ceased to see what was around me; then his face seemed to vanish till only the eyes were left, shining over against mine; next the eyes seemed to be in my own head, and then all became confused—I could see nothing and was forced to shut my eyes, in order to break loose from the feeling of pleasure and fear which his gaze was producing in me …

The day before our wedding day, the weather cleared up towards evening. The rains which had begun in summer gave place to clear weather, and we had our first autumn evening, bright and cold. It was a wet, cold, shining world, and the garden showed for the first time the spaciousness and colour and bareness of autumn. The sky was clear, cold, and pale. I went to bed happy in the thought that tomorrow, our wedding day, would be fine. I awoke with the sun, and the thought that this very day … seemed alarming and surprising. I went out into the garden. The sun had just risen and shone fitfully through the meagre yellow leaves of the lime avenue. The path was strewn with rustling leaves, clusters of mountain ash berries hung red and wrinkled on the boughs, with a sprinkling of frostbitten crumpled leaves; the dahlias were black and wrinkled. The first rime lay like silver on the pale green of the grass and on the broken burdock plants round the house. In the clear cold sky there was not, and could not be, a single cloud.

"Can it possibly be today?" I asked myself, incredulous of my own happiness. "Is it possible that I shall wake tomorrow, not here but in that strange house with the pillars? Is it possible that I shall never again wait for his coming and meet him, and sit up late with Kátya to talk about him? Shall I never sit with him beside the piano in our drawing room? never see him off and feel uneasy about him on dark nights?" But I remembered that he promised yesterday to pay a last

visit, and that Kátya had insisted on my trying on my wedding dress, and had said "For tomorrow." I believed for a moment that it was all real, and then doubted again. "Can it be that after today I shall be living there with a mother-in-law, without Nadëzhda or old Grigóri or Kátya? Shall I go to bed without kissing my old nurse good night and hearing her say, while she signs me with the cross from old custom, 'Good night, Miss'? Shall I never again teach Sónya and play with her and knock through the wall to her in the morning and hear her hearty laugh? Shall I become from today someone that I myself do not know? and is a new world, that will realize my hopes and desires, opening before me? and will that new world last forever?" alone with these thoughts I was depressed and impatient for his arrival. He came early, and it required his presence to convince me that I should really be his wife that very day, and the prospect ceased to frighten me.

Before dinner we walked to our church, to attend a memorial service for my father.

"If only he were living now!" I thought as we were returning and I leant silently on the arm of him who had been the dearest friend of the object of my thoughts. During the service, while I pressed my forehead against the cold stone of the chapel floor, I called up my father so vividly; I was so convinced that he understood me and approved my choice, that I felt as if his spirit were still hovering over us and blessing me. And my recollections and hopes, my joy and sadness, made up one solemn and satisfied feeling which was in harmony with the fresh still air, the silence, the bare fields and pale sky, from which the bright but powerless rays, trying in vain to burn my cheek, fell over all the landscape. My companion seemed to understand and share my feeling. He walked slowly and silently; and his face, at which I glanced from time to time, expressed the same serious mood between joy and sorrow which I shared with nature.

Suddenly he turned to me, and I saw that he intended to speak. "Suppose he starts some other subject than that which is in my mind?" I thought. But he began to speak of my father and did not even name him.

"He once said to me in jest, 'you should marry my Másha,' " he began.

"He would have been happy now," I answered, pressing closer the arm which held mine.

"You were a child then," he went on, looking into my eyes; "I loved those eyes and used to kiss them only because they were like his, never thinking they would be so dear to me for their own sake. I used to call

you Másha then."

"I want you to say 'thou' to me," I said.

"I was just going to," he answered; "I feel for the first time that *thou art* entirely mine;" and his calm happy gaze that drew me to him rested on me.

We went on along the foot path over the beaten and trampled stubble; our voices and footsteps were the only sounds. On one side the brownish stubble stretched over a hollow to a distant leafless wood; across it at some distance a peasant was noiselessly ploughing a black strip which grew wider and wider. A drove of horses scattered under the hill seemed close to us. On the other side, as far as the garden and our house peeping through the trees, a field of winter corn, thawed by the sun, showed black with occasional patches of green. The winter sun shone over everything, and everything was covered with long gossamer spider's webs, which floated in the air round us, lay on the frost-dried stubble, and got into our eyes and hair and clothes. When we spoke, the sound of our voices hung in the motionless air above us, as if we two were alone in the whole world—alone under that azure vault, in which the beams of the winter sun played and flashed without scorching.

I too wished to say "thou" to him, but I felt ashamed.

"Why *dost thou* walk so fast?" I said quickly and almost in a whisper; I could not help blushing.

He slackened his pace, and the gaze he turned on me was even more affectionate, gay, and happy.

At home we found that his mother and the inevitable guests had arrived already, and I was never alone with him again till we came out of church to drive to Nikólskoe.

The church was nearly empty: I just caught a glimpse of his mother standing up straight on a mat by the choir and of Kátya wearing a cap with purple ribbons and with tears on her cheeks, and of two or three of our servants looking curiously at me. I did not look at him, but felt his presence there beside me. I attended to the words of the prayers and repeated them, but they found no echo in my heart. Unable to pray, I looked listlessly at the icons, the candles, the embroidered cross on the priest's cope, the screen, and the window, and took nothing in. I only felt that something strange was being done to me. At last the priest turned to us with the cross in his hand, congratulated us, and said, "I christened you and by God's mercy have lived to marry you." Kátya and his mother kissed us, and Grigóri's voice was heard, calling up the carriage. But I was only frightened and disappointed: all was over, but nothing extraordinary, nothing worthy of the Sacrament

I had just received, had taken place in myself. He and I exchanged kisses, but the kiss seemed strange and not expressive of our feeling. "Is this all?" I thought. We went out of church, the sound of wheels reverberated under the vaulted roof, the fresh air blew on my face, he put on his hat and handed me into the carriage. Through the window I could see a frosty moon with a halo round it. He sat down beside me and shut the door after him. I felt a sudden pang. The assurance of his proceedings seemed to me insulting. Kátya called out that I should put something on my head; the wheels rumbled on the stone and then moved along the soft road, and we were off. Huddling in a corner, I looked out at the distant fields and the road flying past in the cold glitter of the moon. Without looking at him, I felt his presence beside me. "Is this all I have got from the moment, of which I expected so much?" I thought; and still it seemed humiliating and insulting to be sitting alone with him, and so close. I turned to him, intending to speak; but the words would not come, as if my love had vanished, giving place to a feeling of mortification and alarm.

"Till this moment I did not believe it was possible," he said in a low voice in answer to my look.

"But I am afraid somehow," I said.

"Afraid of me, my dear?" he said, taking my hand and bending over it.

My hand lay lifeless in his, and the cold at my heart was painful.

"Yes," I whispered.

But at that moment my heart began to beat faster, my hand trembled and pressed his, I grew hot, my eyes sought his in the half-darkness, and all at once I felt that I did not fear him, that this fear was love—a new love still more tender and stronger than the old. I felt that I was wholly his, and that I was happy in his power over me.

Part II

I

Days, weeks, two whole months of seclusion in the country slipped by unnoticed, as we thought then; and yet those two months comprised feelings, emotions, and happiness, sufficient for a lifetime. Our plans for the regulation of our life in the country were not carried out at all in the way that we expected; but the reality was not inferior to our ideal. There was none of that hard work, performance of duty, self-

sacrifice, and life for others, which I had pictured to myself before our marriage; there was, on the contrary, merely a selfish feeling of love for one another, a wish to be loved, a constant causeless gaiety and entire oblivion of all the world. It is true that my husband sometimes went to his study to work, or drove to town on business, or walked about attending to the management of the estate; but I saw what it cost him to tear himself away from me. He confessed later that every occupation, in my absence, seemed to him mere nonsense in which it was impossible to take any interest. It was just the same with me. If I read, or played the piano, or passed my time with his mother, or taught in the school, I did so only because each of these occupations was connected with him and won his approval; but whenever the thought of him was not associated with any duty, my hands fell by my sides and it seemed to me absurd to think that anything existed apart from him. Perhaps it was a wrong and selfish feeling, but it gave me happiness and lifted me high above all the world. He alone existed on earth for me, and I considered him the best and most faultless man in the world; so that I could not live for anything else than for him, and my one object was to realize his conception of me. And in his eyes I was the first and most excellent woman in the world, the possessor of all possible virtues; and I strove to be that woman in the opinion of the first and best of men.

He came to my room one day while I was praying. I looked round at him and went on with my prayers. Not wishing to interrupt me, he sat down at a table and opened a book. But I thought he was looking at me and looked round myself. He smiled, I laughed, and had to stop my prayers.

"Have you prayed already?" I asked.

"Yes. But you go; I'll go away."

"You do say your prayers, I hope?"

He made no answer and was about to leave the room when I stopped him.

"Darling, for my sake, please repeat the prayers with me!" He stood up beside me, dropped his arms awkwardly, and began, with a serious face and some hesitation. Occasionally he turned towards me, seeking signs of approval and aid in my face.

When he came to an end, I laughed and embraced him.

"I feel just as if I were ten! And you do it all!" he said, blushing and kissing my hands.

Our house was one of those old-fashioned country houses in which several generations have passed their lives together under one roof, respecting and loving one another. It was all redolent of good sound

family traditions, which as soon as I entered it seemed to become mine too. The management of the household was carried on by Tatyána Semënovna, my mother-in-law, on old-fashioned lines. Of grace and beauty there was not much; but, from the servants down to the furniture and food, there was abundance of everything, and a general cleanliness, solidity, and order, which inspired respect. The drawing room furniture was arranged symmetrically; there were portraits on the walls, and the floor was covered with homemade carpets and mats. In the morning room there was an old piano, with chiffoniers of two different patterns, sofas, and little carved tables with bronze ornaments. My sitting room, specially arranged by Tatyána Semënovna, contained the best furniture in the house, of many styles and periods, including an old pierglass, which I was frightened to look into at first, but came to value as an old friend. Though Tatyána Semënovna's voice was never heard, the whole household went like a clock. The number of servants was far too large (they all wore soft boots with no heels, because Tatyána Semënovna had an intense dislike for stamping heels and creaking soles); but they all seemed proud of their calling, trembled before their old mistress, treated my husband and me with an affectionate air of patronage, and performed their duties, to all appearance, with extreme satisfaction. Every Saturday the floors were scoured and the carpets beaten without fail; on the first of every month there was a religious service in the house and holy water was sprinkled; on Tatyána Semënovna's name day and on her son's (and on mine too, beginning from that autumn) an entertainment was regularly provided for the whole neighbourhood. And all this had gone on without a break ever since the beginning of Tatyána Semënovna's life.

My husband took no part in the household management, he attended only to the farm-work and the labourers, and gave much time to this. Even in winter he got up so early that I often woke to find him gone. He generally came back for early tea, which we drank alone together; and at that time, when the worries and vexations of the farm were over, he was almost always in that state of high spirits which we called "wild ecstasy." I often made him tell me what he had been doing in the morning, and he gave such absurd accounts that we both laughed till we cried. Sometimes I insisted on a serious account, and he gave it, restraining a smile. I watched his eyes and moving lips and took nothing in: the sight of him and the sound of his voice was pleasure enough.

"Well, what have I been saying? repeat it," he would sometimes say. But I could repeat nothing. It seemed so absurd that *he* should

talk to *me* of any other subject than ourselves. As if it mattered in the least what went on in the world outside! It was at a much later time that I began to some extent to understand and take an interest in his occupations. Tatyána Semënovna never appeared before dinner: she breakfasted alone and said good morning to us by deputy. In our exclusive little world of frantic happiness a voice from the staid orderly region in which she dwelt was quite startling: I often lost self-control and could only laugh without speaking, when the maid stood before me with folded hands and made her formal report: "The mistress bade me inquire how you slept after your walk yesterday evening; and about her I was to report that she had pain in her side all night, and a stupid dog barked in the village and kept her awake; and also I was to ask how you liked the bread this morning, and to tell you that it was not Tarás who baked today, but Nikoláshka who was trying his hand for the first time; and she says his baking is not at all bad, especially the cracknels: but the tea-rusks were over-baked." Before dinner we saw little of each other: he wrote or went out again while I played the piano or read; but at four o'clock we all met in the drawing room before dinner. Tatyána Semënovna sailed out of her own room, and certain poor and pious maiden ladies, of whom there were always two or three living in the house, made their appearance also. Every day without fail my husband by old habit offered his arm to his mother, to take her in to dinner; but she insisted that I should take the other, so that every day, without fail, we stuck in the doors and got in each other's way. She also presided at dinner, where the conversation, if rather solemn, was polite and sensible. The commonplace talk between my husband and me was a pleasant interruption to the formality of those entertainments. Sometimes there were squabbles between mother and son and they bantered one another; and I especially enjoyed the scenes, because they were the best proof of the strong and tender love which united the two. After dinner Tatyána Semënovna went to the parlour, where she sat in an armchair and ground her snuff or cut the leaves of new books, while we read aloud or went off to the piano in the morning room. We read much together at this time, but music was our favourite and best enjoyment, always evoking fresh chords in our hearts and as it were revealing each afresh to the other. While I played his favourite pieces, he sat on a distant sofa where I could hardly see him. He was ashamed to betray the impression produced on him by the music; but often, when he was not expecting it, I rose from the piano, went up to him, and tried to detect on his face signs of emotion—the unnatural brightness and moistness of the eyes, which he tried in vain to conceal.

Tatyána Semënovna, though she often wanted to take a look at us there, was also anxious to put no constraint upon us. So she always passed through the room with an air of indifference and a pretence of being busy; but I knew that she had no real reason for going to her room and returning so soon. In the evening I poured out tea in the large drawing room, and all the household met again. This solemn ceremony of distributing cups and glasses before the solemnly shining samovar made me nervous for a long time. I felt myself still unworthy of such a distinction, too young and frivolous to turn the tap of such a big samovar, to put glasses on Nikíta's salver, saying "For Peter Ivánovich," "For Márya Mínichna," to ask "Is it sweet enough?" and to leave out lumps of sugar for Nurse and other deserving persons. "Capital! capital! Just like a grown-up person!" was a frequent comment from my husband, which only increased my confusion.

After tea Tatyána Semënovna played patience or listened to Márya Mínichna telling fortunes by the cards. Then she kissed us both and signed us with the cross, and we went off to our own rooms. But we generally sat up together till midnight, and that was our best and pleasantest time. He told me stories of his past life; we made plans and sometimes even talked philosophy; but we tried always to speak low, for fear we should be heard upstairs and reported to Tatyána Semënovna, who insisted on our going to bed early. Sometimes we grew hungry; and then we stole off to the pantry, secured a cold supper by the good offices of Nikíta, and ate it in my sitting room by the light of one candle. He and I lived like strangers in that big old house, where the uncompromising spirit of the past and of Tatyána Semënovna ruled supreme. Not she only, but the servants, the old ladies, the furniture, even the pictures, inspired me with respect and a little alarm, and made me feel that he and I were a little out of place in that house and must always be very careful and cautious in our doings. Thinking it over now, I see that many things—the pressure of that unvarying routine, and that crowd of idle and inquisitive servants—were uncomfortable and oppressive; but at the time that very constraint made our love for one another still keener. Not I only, but he also, never grumbled openly at anything; on the contrary he shut his eyes to what was amiss. Dmítri Sídorov, one of the footmen, was a great smoker; and regularly every day, when we two were in the morning room after dinner, he went to my husband's study to take tobacco from the jar; and it was a sight to see Sergéy Mikháylych creeping on tiptoe to me with a face between delight and terror, and a wink and a warning forefinger, while he pointed at Dmítri Sídorov, who was quite unconscious of being

watched. Then, when Dmítri Sídorov had gone away without having seen us, in his joy that all had passed off successfully, he declared (as he did on every other occasion) that I was a darling, and kissed me. At times his calm connivance and apparent indifference to everything annoyed me, and I took it for weakness, never noticing that I acted in the same way myself. "It's like a child who dares not show his will," I thought.

"My dear! my dear!" he said once when I told him that his weakness surprised me; "how can a man, as happy as I am, be dissatisfied with anything? Better to give way myself than to put compulsion on others; of that I have long been convinced. There is no condition in which one cannot be happy; but our life is such bliss! I simply cannot be angry; to me now nothing seems bad, but only pitiful and amusing. Above all—*le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*.[2] Will you believe it, when I hear a ring at the bell, or receive a letter, or even wake up in the morning, I'm frightened. Life must go on, something may change; and nothing can be better than the present."

I believed him but did not understand him. I was happy; but I took that as a matter of course, the invariable experience of people in our position, and believed that there was somewhere, I knew not where, a different happiness, not greater but different.

So two months went by and winter came with its cold and snow; and, in spite of his company, I began to feel lonely, that life was repeating itself, that there was nothing new either in him or in myself, and that we were merely going back to what had been before. He began to give more time to business which kept him away from me, and my old feeling returned, that there was a special department of his mind into which he was unwilling to admit me. His unbroken calmness provoked me. I loved him as much as ever and was as happy as ever in his love; but my love, instead of increasing, stood still; and another new and disquieting sensation began to creep into my heart. To love him was not enough for me after the happiness I had felt in falling in love. I wanted movement and not a calm course of existence. I wanted excitement and danger and the chance to sacrifice myself for my love. I felt in myself a superabundance of energy which found no outlet in our quiet life. I had fits of depression which I was ashamed of and tried to conceal from him, and fits of excessive tenderness and high spirits which alarmed him. He realized my state of mind before I did, and proposed a visit to Petersburg; but I begged him to give this up and

[2]The better is the enemy of the good.

not to change our manner of life or spoil our happiness. Happy indeed I was; but I was tormented by the thought that this happiness cost me no effort and no sacrifice, though I was even painfully conscious of my power to face both. I loved him and saw that I was all in all to him; but I wanted everyone to see our love; I wanted to love him in spite of obstacles. My mind, and even my senses, were fully occupied; but there was another feeling of youth and craving for movement, which found no satisfaction in our quiet life. What made him say that, whenever I liked, we could go to town? Had he not said so I might have realized that my uncomfortable feelings were my own fault and dangerous nonsense, and that the sacrifice I desired was there before me, in the task of overcoming these feelings. I was haunted by the thought that I could escape from depression by a mere change from the country; and at the same time I felt ashamed and sorry to tear him away, out of selfish motives, from all he cared for. So time went on, the snow grew deeper, and there we remained together, all alone and just the same as before, while outside I knew there was noise and glitter and excitement, and hosts of people suffering or rejoicing without one thought of us and our remote existence. I suffered most from the feeling that custom was daily petrifying our lives into one fixed shape, that our minds were losing their freedom and becoming enslaved to the steady passionless course of time. The morning always found us cheerful; we were polite at dinner, and affectionate in the evening. "It is all right," I thought, "to do good to others and lead upright lives, as he says; but there is time for that later; and there are other things, for which the time is now or never." I wanted, not what I had got, but a life of struggle; I wanted feeling to be the guide of life, and not life to guide feeling. If only I could go with him to the edge of a precipice and say, "One step, and I shall fall over—one movement, and I shall be lost!" then, pale with fear, he would catch me in his strong arms and hold me over the edge till my blood froze, and then carry me off whither he pleased.

This state of feeling even affected my health, and I began to suffer from nerves. One morning I was worse than usual. He had come back from the estate office out of sorts, which was a rare thing with him. I noticed it at once and asked what was the matter. He would not tell me and said it was of no importance. I found out afterwards that the police inspector, out of spite against my husband, was summoning our peasants, making illegal demands on them, and using threats to them. My husband could not swallow this at once; he could not feel it merely "pitiful and amusing." He was provoked, and therefore unwilling to speak of it to me. But it seemed to me that he did not wish to

speak to about it because he considered me a mere child, incapable of understanding his concerns. I turned from him and said no more. I then told the servant to ask Márya Mínichna, who was staying in the house, to join us at breakfast. I ate my breakfast very fast and took her to the morning room where I began to talk loudly to her about some trifle which did not interest me in the least. He walked about the room, glancing at us from time to time. This made me more and more inclined to talk and even to laugh; all that I said myself, and all that Márya Mínichna said, seemed to me laughable. Without a word to me he went off to his study and shut the door behind him. When I ceased to hear him, all my high spirits vanished at once; indeed Márya Mínichna was surprised and asked what was the matter. I sat down on a sofa without answering, and felt ready to cry. "What has he got on his mind?" I wondered; "some trifle which he thinks important; but, if he tried to tell it me, I should soon show him it was mere nonsense. But he must needs think that I won't understand, must humiliate me by his majestic composure, and always be in the right as against me. But I too am in the right when I find things tiresome and trivial," I reflected; "and I do well to want an active life rather than to stagnate in one spot and feel life flowing past me. I want to move forward, to have some new experience every day and every hour, whereas he wants to stand still and to keep me standing beside him. And how easy it would be for him to gratify me! He need not take me to town; he need only be like me and not put compulsion on himself and regulate his feelings, but live simply. That is the advice he gives me, but he is not simple himself. That is what is the matter."

I felt the tears rising and knew that I was irritated with him. My irritation frightened me, and I went to his study. He was sitting at the table, writing. Hearing my step, he looked up for a moment and then went on writing; he seemed calm and unconcerned. His look vexed me: instead of going up to him, I stood beside his writing table, opened a book, and began to look at it. He broke off his writing again and looked at me.

"Másha, are you out of sorts?" he asked.

I replied with a cold look, as much as to say, "You are very polite, but what is the use of asking?" He shook his head and smiled with a tender timid air; but his smile, for the first time, drew no answering smile from me.

"What happened to you today?" I asked; "why did you not tell me?"

"Nothing much—a trifling nuisance," he said. "But I might tell you

now. Two of our serfs went off to the town …"

But I would not let him go on.

"Why would you not tell me, when I asked you at breakfast?"

"I was angry then and should have said something foolish."

"I wished to know then."

"Why?"

"Why do you suppose that I can never help you in anything?"

"Not help me!" he said, dropping his pen. "Why, I believe that without you I could not live. You not only help me in everything I do, but you do it yourself. You are very wide of the mark," he said, and laughed. "My life depends on you. I am pleased with things, only because you are there, because I need you …"

"Yes, I know; I am a delightful child who must be humoured and kept quiet," I said in a voice that astonished him, so that he looked up as if this was a new experience; "but I don't want to be quiet and calm; that is more in your line, and too much in your line," I added.

"Well," he began quickly, interrupting me and evidently afraid to let me continue, "when I tell you the facts, I should like to know your opinion."

"I don't want to hear them now," I answered. I did want to hear the story, but I found it so pleasant to break down his composure. "I don't want to play at life," I said, "but to live, as you do yourself."

His face, which reflected every feeling so quickly and so vividly, now expressed pain and intense attention.

"I want to share your life, to … ," but I could not go on—his face showed such deep distress. He was silent for a moment.

"But what part of my life do you not share?" he asked; "is it because I, and not you, have to bother with the inspector and with tipsy labourers?"

"That's not the only thing," I said.

"For God's sake try to understand me, my dear!" he cried. "I know that excitement is always painful; I have learnt that from the experience of life. I love you, and I can't but wish to save you from excitement. My life consists of my love for you; so you should not make life impossible for me."

"You are always in the right," I said without looking at him.

I was vexed again by his calmness and coolness while I was conscious of annoyance and some feeling akin to penitence.

"Másha, what is the matter?" he asked. "The question is not, which of us is in the right—not at all; but rather, what grievance have you against me? Take time before you answer, and tell me all that is

in your mind. You are dissatisfied with me: and you are, no doubt, right; but let me understand what I have done wrong."

But how could I put my feeling into words? That he understood me at once, that I again stood before him like a child, that I could do nothing without his understanding and foreseeing it—all this only increased my agitation.

"I have no complaint to make of you," I said; "I am merely bored and want not to be bored. But you say that it can't be helped, and, as always, you are right."

I looked at him as I spoke. I had gained my object: his calmness had disappeared, and I read fear and pain in his face.

"Másha," he began in a low troubled voice, "this is no mere trifle: the happiness of our lives is at stake. Please hear me out without answering. Why do you wish to torment me?"

But I interrupted him.

"Oh, I know you will turn out to be right. Words are useless; of course you are right." I spoke coldly, as if some evil spirit were speaking with my voice.

"If you only knew what you are doing!" he said, and his voice shook.

I burst out crying and felt relieved. He sat down beside me and said nothing. I felt sorry for him, ashamed of myself, and annoyed at what I had done. I avoided looking at him. I felt that any look from him at that moment must express severity or perplexity. At last I looked up and saw his eyes: they were fixed on me with a tender gentle expression that seemed to ask for pardon. I caught his hand and said,

"Forgive me! I don't know myself what I have been saying."

"But I do; and you spoke the truth."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"That we must go to Petersburg," he said; "there is nothing for us to do here just now."

"As you please," I said.

He took me in his arms and kissed me.

"You must forgive me," he said; "for I am to blame."

That evening I played to him for a long time, while he walked about the room. He had a habit of muttering to himself; and when I asked him what he was muttering, he always thought for a moment and then told me exactly what it was. It was generally verse, and sometimes mere nonsense, but I could always judge of his mood by it. When I asked him now, he stood still, thought an instant, and then repeated

two lines from Lérmontov:

> He in his madness prays for storms,
> And dreams that storms will bring him peace.

"He is really more than human," I thought; "he knows everything. How can one help loving him?"

I got up, took his arm, and began to walk up and down with him, trying to keep step.

"Well?" he asked, smiling and looking at me.

"All right," I whispered. And then a sudden fit of merriment came over us both: our eyes laughed, we took longer and longer steps, and rose higher and higher on tiptoe. Prancing in this manner, to the profound dissatisfaction of the butler and astonishment of my mother-in-law, who was playing patience in the parlour, we proceeded through the house till we reached the dining room; there we stopped, looked at one another, and burst out laughing.

A fortnight later, before Christmas, we were in Petersburg.

II

The journey to Petersburg, a week in Moscow, visits to my own relations and my husband's, settling down in our new quarters, travel, new towns and new faces—all this passed before me like a dream. It was all so new, various, and delightful, so warmly and brightly lighted up by his presence and his love, that our quiet life in the country seemed to me something very remote and unimportant. I had expected to find people in society proud and cold; but to my great surprise, I was received everywhere with unfeigned cordiality and pleasure, not only by relations, but also by strangers. I seemed to be the one object of their thoughts, and my arrival the one thing they wanted, to complete their happiness. I was surprised too to discover in what seemed to me the very best society a number of people acquainted with my husband, though he had never spoken of them to me; and I often felt it odd and disagreeable to hear him now speak disapprovingly of some of these people who seemed to me so kind. I could not understand his coolness towards them or his endeavours to avoid many acquaintances that seemed to me flattering. Surely, the more kind people one knows, the better; and here everyone was kind.

"This is how we must manage, you see," he said to me before we left the country; "here we are little Croesuses, but in town we shall not

be at all rich. So we must not stay after Easter, or go into society, or we shall get into difficulties. For your sake too I should not wish it."

"Why should we go into society?" I asked; "we shall have a look at the theatres, see our relations, go to the opera, hear some good music, and be ready to come home before Easter."

But these plans were forgotten the moment we got to Petersburg. I found myself at once in such a new and delightful world, surrounded by so many pleasures and confronted by such novel interests, that I instantly, though unconsciously, turned my back on my past life and its plans. "All that was preparatory, a mere playing at life; but here is the real thing! And there is the future too!" Such were my thoughts. The restlessness and symptoms of depression which had troubled me at home vanished at once and entirely, as if by magic. My love for my husband grew calmer, and I ceased to wonder whether he loved me less. Indeed I could not doubt his love: every thought of mine was understood at once, every feeling shared, and every wish gratified by him. His composure, if it still existed, no longer provoked me. I also began to realize that he not only loved me but was proud of me. If we paid a call, or made some new acquaintance, or gave an evening party at which I, trembling inwardly from fear of disgracing myself, acted as hostess, he often said when it was over: "Bravo, young woman! capital! you needn't be frightened; a real success!" And his praise gave me great pleasure. Soon after our arrival he wrote to his mother and asked me to add a postscript, but refused to let me see his letter; of course I insisted on reading it; and he had said: "You would not know Másha again, I don't myself. Where does she get that charming graceful self-confidence and ease, such social gifts with such simplicity and charm and kindliness? Everybody is delighted with her. I can't admire her enough myself, and should be more in love with her than ever, if that were possible."

"Now I know what I am like," I thought. In my joy and pride I felt that I loved him more than before. My success with all our new acquaintances was a complete surprise to me. I heard on all sides, how this uncle had taken a special fancy for me, and that aunt was raving about me; I was told by one admirer that I had no rival among the Petersburg ladies, and assured by another, a lady, that I might, if I cared, lead the fashion in society. A cousin of my husband's, in particular, a Princess D——, middle-aged and very much at home in society, fell in love with me at first sight and paid me compliments which turned my head. The first time that she invited me to a ball and spoke to my husband about it, he turned to me and asked if I

wished to go; I could just detect a sly smile on his face. I nodded assent and felt that I was blushing.

"She looks like a criminal when confessing what she wishes," he said with a good-natured laugh.

"But you said that we must not go into society, and you don't care for it yourself," I answered, smiling and looking imploringly at him.

"Let us go, if you want to very much," he said.

"Really, we had better not."

"Do you want to? very badly?" he asked again.

I said nothing.

"Society in itself is no great harm," he went on; "but unsatisfied social aspirations are a bad and ugly business. We must certainly accept, and we will."

"To tell you the truth," I said, "I never in my life longed for anything as much as I do for this ball."

So we went, and my delight exceeded all my expectations. It seemed to me, more than ever, that I was the centre round which everything revolved, that for my sake alone this great room was lighted up and the band played, and that this crowd of people had assembled to admire me. From the hairdresser and the lady's maid to my partners and the old gentlemen promenading the ball room, all alike seemed to make it plain that they were in love with me. The general verdict formed at the ball about me and reported by my cousin, came to this: I was quite unlike the other women and had a rural simplicity and charm of my own. I was so flattered by my success that I frankly told my husband I should like to attend two or three more balls during the season, and "so get thoroughly sick of them," I added; but I did not mean what I said.

He agreed readily; and he went with me at first with obvious satisfaction. He took pleasure in my success, and seemed to have quite forgotten his former warning or to have changed his opinion.

But a time came when he was evidently bored and wearied by the life we were leading. I was too busy, however, to think about that. Even if I sometimes noticed his eyes fixed questioningly on me with a serious attentive gaze, I did not realize its meaning. I was utterly blinded by this sudden affection which I seemed to evoke in all our new acquaintances, and confused by the unfamiliar atmosphere of luxury, refinement, and novelty. It pleased me so much to find myself in these surroundings not merely his equal but his superior, and yet to love him better and more independently than before, that I could not understand what he could object to for me in society life. I had a new

sense of pride and self-satisfaction when my entry at a ball attracted all eyes, while he, as if ashamed to confess his ownership of me in public, made haste to leave my side and efface himself in the crowd of black coats. "Wait a little!" I often said in my heart, when I identified his obscure and sometimes woebegone figure at the end of the room—"Wait till we get home! Then you will see and understand for whose sake I try to be beautiful and brilliant, and what it is I love in all that surrounds me this evening!" I really believed that my success pleased me only because it enabled me to give it up for his sake. One danger I recognized as possible—that I might be carried away by a fancy for some new acquaintance, and that my husband might grow jealous. But he trusted me so absolutely, and seemed so undisturbed and indifferent, and all the young men were so inferior to him, that I was not alarmed by this one danger. Yet the attention of so many people in society gave me satisfaction, flattered my vanity, and made me think that there was some merit in my love for my husband. Thus I became more offhand and self-confident in my behaviour to him.

"Oh, I saw you this evening carrying on a most animated conversation with Mme. N——," I said one night on returning from a ball, shaking my finger at him. He had really been talking to this lady, who was a well-known figure in Petersburg society. He was more silent and depressed than usual, and I said this to rouse him up.

"What is the good of talking like that, for *you* especially, Másha?" he said with half-closed teeth and frowning as if in pain. "Leave that to others; it does not suit you and me. Pretence of that sort may spoil the true relation between us, which I still hope may come back."

I was ashamed and said nothing.

"Will it ever come back, Másha, do you think?" he asked.

"It never was spoilt and never will be," I said; and I really believed this then.

"God grant that you are right!" he said; "if not, we ought to be going home."

But he only spoke like this once—in general he seemed as satisfied as I was, and I was so gay and so happy! I comforted myself too by thinking, "If he is bored sometimes, I endured the same thing for his sake in the country. If the relation between us has become a little different, everything will be the same again in summer, when we shall be alone in our house at Nikólskoe with Tatyána Semënovna."

So the winter slipped by, and we stayed on, in spite of our plans, over Easter in Petersburg. A week later we were preparing to start; our packing was all done; my husband who had bought things—plants

for the garden and presents for people at Nikólskoe, was in a specially cheerful and affectionate mood. Just then Princess D—— came and begged us to stay till the Saturday, in order to be present at a reception to be given by Countess R——. The countess was very anxious to secure me, because a foreign prince, who was visiting Petersburg and had seen me already at a ball, wished to make my acquaintance; indeed this was his motive for attending the reception, and he declared that I was the most beautiful woman in Russia. All the world was to be there; and, in a word, it would really be too bad, if I did not go too.

My husband was talking to someone at the other end of the drawing room.

"So you will go, won't you, Mary?" said the Princess.

"We meant to start for the country the day after tomorrow," I answered undecidedly, glancing at my husband. Our eyes met, and he turned away at once.

"I must persuade him to stay," she said, "and then we can go on Saturday and turn all heads. All right?"

"It would upset our plans; and we have packed," I answered, beginning to give way.

"She had better go this evening and make her curtsey to the Prince," my husband called out from the other end of the room; and he spoke in a tone of suppressed irritation which I had never heard from him before.

"I declare he's jealous, for the first time in his life," said the lady, laughing. "But it's not for the sake of the Prince I urge it, Sergéy Mikháylych, but for all our sakes. The Countess was so anxious to have her."

"It rests with her entirely," my husband said coldly, and then left the room.

I saw that he was much disturbed, and this pained me. I gave no positive promise. As soon as our visitor left, I went to my husband. He was walking up and down his room, thinking, and neither saw nor heard me when I came in on tiptoe.

Looking at him, I said to myself: "He is dreaming already of his dear Nikólskoe, our morning coffee in the bright drawing room, the land and the labourers, our evenings in the music room, and our secret midnight suppers." Then I decided in my own heart: "Not for all the balls and all the flattering princes in the world will I give up his glad confusion and tender cares." I was just about to say that I did not wish to go to the ball and would refuse, when he looked round, saw me, and frowned. His face, which had been gentle and thoughtful, changed

at once to its old expression of sagacity, penetration, and patronizing composure. He would not show himself to me as a mere man, but had to be a demigod on a pedestal.

"Well, my dear?" he asked, turning towards me with an unconcerned air.

I said nothing. I was provoked, because he was hiding his real self from me, and would not continue to be the man I loved.

"Do you want to go to this reception on Saturday?" he asked.

"I did, but you disapprove. Besides, our things are all packed," I said.

Never before had I heard such coldness in his tone to me, and never before seen such coldness in his eye.

"I shall order the things to be unpacked," he said, "and I shall stay till Tuesday. So you can go to the party, if you like. I hope you will; but I shall not go."

Without looking at me, he began to walk about the room jerkily, as his habit was when perturbed.

"I simply can't understand you," I said, following him with my eyes from where I stood. "You say that you never lose self-control" (he had never really said so); "then why do you talk to me so strangely? I am ready on your account to sacrifice this pleasure, and then you, in a sarcastic tone which is new from you to me, insist that I should go."

"So you make a *sacrifice*!" he threw special emphasis on the last word. "Well, so do I. What could be better? We compete in generosity—what an example of family happiness!"

Such harsh and contemptuous language I had never heard from his lips before. I was not abashed, but mortified by his contempt; and his harshness did not frighten me but made me harsh too. How could *he* speak thus, he who was always so frank and simple and dreaded insincerity in our speech to one another? And what had I done that he should speak so? I really intended to sacrifice for his sake a pleasure in which I could see no harm; and a moment ago I loved him and understood his feelings as well as ever. We had changed parts: now he avoided direct and plain words, and I desired them.

"You are much changed," I said, with a sigh. "How am I guilty before you? It is not this party—you have something else, some old count against me. Why this insincerity? You used to be so afraid of it yourself. Tell me plainly what you complain of." "What will he say?" thought I, and reflected with some complacency that I had done nothing all winter which he could find fault with.

I went into the middle of the room, so that he had to pass close to

me, and looked at him. I thought, "He will come and clasp me in his arms, and there will be an end of it." I was even sorry that I should not have the chance of proving him wrong. But he stopped at the far end of the room and looked at me.

"Do you not understand yet?" he asked.

"No, I don't."

"Then I must explain. What I feel, and cannot help feeling, positively sickens me for the first time in my life." He stopped, evidently startled by the harsh sound of his own voice.

"What do you mean?" I asked, with tears of indignation in my eyes.

"It sickens me that the Prince admired you, and you therefore run to meet him, forgetting your husband and yourself and womanly dignity; and you wilfully misunderstand what your want of self-respect makes your husband feel for you: you actually come to your husband and speak of the 'sacrifice' you are making, by which you mean—'To show myself to His Highness is a great pleasure to me, but I "sacrifice" it.' "

The longer he spoke, the more he was excited by the sound of his own voice, which was hard and rough and cruel. I had never seen him, had never thought of seeing him, like that. The blood rushed to my heart and I was frightened; but I felt that I had nothing to be ashamed of, and the excitement of wounded vanity made me eager to punish him.

"I have long been expecting this," I said. "Go on. Go on!"

"What you expected, I don't know," he went on; "but I might well expect the worst, when I saw you day after day sharing the dirtiness and idleness and luxury of this foolish society, and it has come at last. Never have I felt such shame and pain as now—pain for myself, when your friend thrusts her unclean fingers into my heart and speaks of my jealousy!—jealousy of a man whom neither you nor I know; and you refuse to understand me and offer to make a sacrifice for me—and what sacrifice? I am ashamed for you, for your degradation! … Sacrifice!" he repeated again.

"Ah, so this is a husband's power," thought I: "to insult and humiliate a perfectly innocent woman. Such may be a husband's rights, but I will not submit to them." I felt the blood leave my face and a strange distension of my nostrils, as I said, "No! I make no sacrifice on your account. I shall go to the party on Saturday without fail."

"And I hope you may enjoy it. But all is over between us two!" he cried out in a fit of unrestrained fury. "But you shall not torture

me any longer! I was a fool, when I … ," but his lips quivered, and he refrained with a visible effort from ending the sentence.

I feared and hated him at that moment. I wished to say a great deal to him and punish him for all his insults; but if I had opened my mouth, I should have lost my dignity by bursting into tears. I said nothing and left the room. But as soon as I ceased to hear his footsteps, I was horrified at what we had done. I feared that the tie which had made all my happiness might really be snapped forever; and I thought of going back. But then I wondered: "Is he calm enough now to understand me, if I mutely stretch out my hand and look at him? Will he realize my generosity? What if he calls my grief a mere pretence? Or he may feel sure that he is right and accept my repentance and forgive me with unruffled pride. And why, oh why, did he whom I loved so well insult me so cruelly?"

I went not to him but to my own room, where I sat for a long time and cried. I recalled with horror each word of our conversation, and substituted different words, kind words, for those that we had spoken, and added others; and then again I remembered the reality with horror and a feeling of injury. In the evening I went down for tea and met my husband in the presence of a friend who was staying with us; and it seemed to me that a wide gulf had opened between us from that day. Our friend asked me when we were to start; and before I could speak, my husband answered:

"On Tuesday," he said; "we have to stay for Countess R——'s reception." He turned to me: "I believe you intend to go?" he asked.

His matter-of-fact tone frightened me, and I looked at him timidly. His eyes were directed straight at me with an unkind and scornful expression; his voice was cold and even.

"Yes," I answered.

When we were alone that evening, he came up to me and held out his hand.

"Please forget what I said to you today," he began.

As I took his hand, a smile quivered on my lips and the tears were ready to flow; but he took his hand away and sat down on an armchair at some distance, as if fearing a sentimental scene. "Is it possible that he still thinks himself in the right?" I wondered; and, though I was quite ready to explain and to beg that we might not go to the party, the words died on my lips.

"I must write to my mother that we have put off our departure," he said; "otherwise she will be uneasy."

"When do you think of going?" I asked.

"On Tuesday, after the reception," he replied.

"I hope it is not on my account," I said, looking into his eyes; but those eyes merely looked—they said nothing, and a veil seemed to cover them from me. His face seemed to me to have grown suddenly old and disagreeable.

We went to the reception, and good friendly relations between us seemed to have been restored, but these relations were quite different from what they had been.

At the party I was sitting with other ladies when the Prince came up to me, so that I had to stand up in order to speak to him. As I rose, my eyes involuntarily sought my husband. He was looking at me from the other end of the room, and now turned away. I was seized by a sudden sense of shame and pain; in my confusion I blushed all over my face and neck under the Prince's eye. But I was forced to stand and listen, while he spoke, eyeing me from his superior height. Our conversation was soon over: there was no room for him beside me, and he, no doubt, felt that I was uncomfortable with him. We talked of the last ball, of where I should spend the summer, and so on. As he left me, he expressed a wish to make the acquaintance of my husband, and I saw them meet and begin a conversation at the far end of the room. The Prince evidently said something about me; for he smiled in the middle of their talk and looked in my direction.

My husband suddenly flushed up. He made a low bow and turned away from the prince without being dismissed. I blushed too: I was ashamed of the impression which I and, still more, my husband must have made on the Prince. Everyone, I thought, must have noticed my awkward shyness when I was presented, and my husband's eccentric behaviour. "Heaven knows how they will interpret such conduct? Perhaps they know already about my scene with my husband!"

Princess D—— drove me home, and on the way I spoke to her about my husband. My patience was at an end, and I told her the whole story of what had taken place between us owing to this unlucky party. To calm me, she said that such differences were very common and quite unimportant, and that our quarrel would leave no trace behind. She explained to me her view of my husband's character—that he had become very stiff and unsociable. I agreed, and believed that I had learned to judge him myself more calmly and more truly.

But when I was alone with my husband later, the thought that I had sat in judgement upon him weighed like a crime upon my conscience; and I felt that the gulf which divided us had grown still greater.

III

From that day there was a complete change in our life and our relations to each other. We were no longer as happy when we were alone together as before. To certain subjects we gave a wide berth, and conversation flowed more easily in the presence of a third person. When the talk turned on life in the country, or on a ball, we were uneasy and shrank from looking at one another. Both of us knew where the gulf between us lay, and seemed afraid to approach it. I was convinced that he was proud and irascible, and that I must be careful not to touch him on his weak point. He was equally sure that I disliked the country and was dying for social distraction, and that he must put up with this unfortunate taste of mine. We both avoided frank conversation on these topics, and each misjudged the other. We had long ceased to think each other the most perfect people in the world; each now judged the other in secret, and measured the offender by the standard of other people. I fell ill before we left Petersburg, and we went from there to a house near town, from which my husband went on alone, to join his mother at Nikólskoe. By that time I was well enough to have gone with him, but he urged me to stay on the pretext of my health. I knew, however, that he was really afraid we should be uncomfortable together in the country; so I did not insist much, and he went off alone. I felt it dull and solitary in his absence; but when he came back, I saw that he did not add to my life what he had added formerly. In the old days every thought and experience weighed on me like a crime till I had imparted it to him; every action and word of his seemed to me a model of perfection; we often laughed for joy at the mere sight of each other. But these relations had changed, so imperceptibly that we had not even noticed their disappearance. Separate interests and cares, which we no longer tried to share, made their appearance, and even the fact of our estrangement ceased to trouble us. The idea became familiar, and, before a year had passed, each could look at the other without confusion. His fits of boyish merriment with me had quite vanished; his mood of calm indulgence to all that passed, which used to provoke me, had disappeared; there was an end of those penetrating looks which used to confuse and delight me, an end of the ecstasies and prayers which we once shared in common. We did not even meet often: he was continually absent, with no fears or regrets for leaving me alone; and I was constantly in society, where I did not need him.

There were no further scenes or quarrels between us. I tried to satisfy him, he carried out all my wishes, and we seemed to love each

other.

When we were by ourselves, which we seldom were, I felt neither joy nor excitement nor embarrassment in his company: it seemed like being alone. I realized that he was my husband and no mere stranger, a good man, and as familiar to me as my own self. I was convinced that I knew just what he would say and do, and how he would look; and if anything he did surprised me, I concluded that he had made a mistake. I expected nothing from him. In a word, he was my husband—and that was all. It seemed to me that things must be so, as a matter of course, and that no other relations between us had ever existed. When he left home, especially at first, I was lonely and frightened and felt keenly my need of support; when he came back, I ran to his arms with joy, though two hours later my joy was quite forgotten, and I found nothing to say to him. Only at moments which sometimes occurred between us of quiet undemonstrative affection, I felt something wrong and some pain at my heart, and I seemed to read the same story in his eyes. I was conscious of a limit to tenderness, which he seemingly would not, and I could not, overstep. This saddened me sometimes; but I had no leisure to reflect on anything, and my regret for a change which I vaguely realized I tried to drown in the distractions which were always within my reach. Fashionable life, which had dazzled me at first by its glitter and flattery of my self-love, now took entire command of my nature, became a habit, laid its fetters upon me, and monopolized my capacity for feeling. I could not bear solitude, and was afraid to reflect on my position. My whole day, from late in the morning till late at night, was taken up by the claims of society; even if I stayed at home, my time was not my own. This no longer seemed to me either gay or dull, but it seemed that so, and not otherwise, it always had to be.

So three years passed, during which our relations to one another remained unchanged and seemed to have taken a fixed shape which could not become either better or worse. Though two events of importance in our family life took place during that time, neither of them changed my own life. These were the birth of my first child and the death of Tatyána Semënovna. At first the feeling of motherhood did take hold of me with such power, and produce in me such a passion of unanticipated joy, that I believed this would prove the beginning of a new life for me. But, in the course of two months, when I began to go out again, my feeling grew weaker and weaker, till it passed into mere habit and the lifeless performance of a duty. My husband, on the contrary, from the birth of our first boy, became his old self again—gentle, composed,

and home-loving, and transferred to the child his old tenderness and gaiety. Many a night when I went, dressed for a ball, to the nursery, to sign the child with the cross before he slept, I found my husband there and felt his eyes fixed on me with something of reproof in their serious gaze. Then I was ashamed and even shocked by my own callousness, and asked myself if I was worse than other women. "But it can't be helped," I said to myself; "I love my child, but to sit beside him all day long would bore me; and nothing will make me pretend what I do not really feel."

His mother's death was a great sorrow to my husband; he said that he found it painful to go on living at Nikólskoe. For myself, although I mourned for her and sympathized with my husband's sorrow, yet I found life in that house easier and pleasanter after her death. Most of those three years we spent in town: I went only once to Nikólskoe for two months; and the third year we went abroad and spent the summer at Baden.

I was then twenty-one; our financial position was, I believed, satisfactory; my domestic life gave me all that I asked of it; everyone I knew, it seemed to me, loved me; my health was good; I was the best-dressed woman in Baden; I knew that I was good-looking; the weather was fine; I enjoyed the atmosphere of beauty and refinement; and, in short, I was in excellent spirits. They had once been even higher at Nikólskoe, when my happiness was in myself and came from the feeling that I deserved to be happy, and from the anticipation of still greater happiness to come. That was a different state of things; but I did very well this summer also. I had no special wishes or hopes or fears; it seemed to me that my life was full and my conscience easy. Among all the visitors at Baden that season there was no one man whom I preferred to the rest, or even to our old ambassador, Prince K——, who was assiduous in his attentions to me. One was young, and another old; one was English and fair, another French and wore a beard—to me they were all alike, but all indispensable. Indistinguishable as they were, they together made up the atmosphere which I found so pleasant. But there was one, an Italian marquis, who stood out from the rest by reason of the boldness with which he expressed his admiration. He seized every opportunity of being with me—danced with me, rode with me, and met me at the casino; and everywhere he spoke to me of my charms. Several times I saw him from my windows loitering round our hotel, and the fixed gaze of his bright eyes often troubled me, and made me blush and turn away. He was young, handsome, and well-mannered; and above all, by his smile and the expression of his

brow, he resembled my husband, though much handsomer than he. He struck me by this likeness, though in general, in his lips, eyes, and long chin, there was something coarse and animal which contrasted with my husband's charming expression of kindness and noble serenity. I supposed him to be passionately in love with me, and thought of him sometimes with proud commiseration. When I tried at times to soothe him and change his tone to one of easy, half-friendly confidence, he resented the suggestion with vehemence, and continued to disquiet me by a smouldering passion which was ready at any moment to burst forth. Though I would not own it even to myself, I feared him and often thought of him against my sill. My husband knew him, and greeted him—even more than other acquaintances of ours who regarded him only as my husband—with coldness and disdain.

Towards the end of the season I fell ill and stayed indoors for a fortnight. The first evening that I went out again to hear the band, I learnt that Lady S——, an Englishwoman famous for her beauty, who had long been expected, had arrived in my absence. My return was welcomed, and a group gathered round me; but a more distinguished group attended the beautiful stranger. She and her beauty were the one subject of conversation around me. When I saw her, she was really beautiful, but her self-satisfied expression struck me as disagreeable, and I said so. That day everything that had formerly seemed amusing, seemed dull. Lady S—— arranged an expedition to the ruined castle for the next day; but I declined to be of the party. Almost everyone else went; and my opinion of Baden underwent a complete change. Everything and everybody seemed to me stupid and tiresome; I wanted to cry, to break off my cure, to return to Russia. There was some evil feeling in my soul, but I did not yet acknowledge it to myself. Pretending that I was not strong, I ceased to appear at crowded parties; if I went out, it was only in the morning by myself, to drink the waters; and my only companion was Mme. M——, a Russian lady, with whom I sometimes took drives in the surrounding country. My husband was absent: he had gone to Heidelberg for a time, intending to return to Russia when my cure was over, and only paid me occasional visits at Baden.

One day when Lady S—— had carried off all the company on a hunting expedition, Mme. M—— and I drove in the afternoon to the castle. While our carriage moved slowly along the winding road, bordered by ancient chestnut trees and commanding a vista of the pretty and pleasant country round Baden, with the setting sun lighting it up, our conversation took a more serious turn than had ever happened to

us before. I had known my companion for a long time; but she appeared to me now in a new light, as a well-principled and intelligent woman, to whom it was possible to speak without reserve, and whose friendship was worth having. We spoke of our private concerns, of our children, of the emptiness of life at Baden, till we felt a longing for Russia and the Russian countryside. When we entered the castle we were still under the impression of this serious feeling. Within the walls there was shade and coolness; the sunlight played from above upon the ruins. Steps and voices were audible. The landscape, charming enough but cold to a Russian eye, lay before us in the frame made by a doorway. We sat down to rest and watched the sunset in silence. The voices now sounded louder, and I thought I heard my own name. I listened and could not help overhearing every word. I recognized the voices: the speakers were the Italian marquis and a French friend of his whom I knew also. They were talking of me and of Lady S——, and the Frenchman was comparing us as rival beauties. Though he said nothing insulting, his words made my pulse quicken. He explained in detail the good points of us both. I was already a mother, while Lady S—— was only nineteen; though I had the advantage in hair, my rival had a better figure. "Besides," he added, "Lady S—— is a real grande dame, and the other is nothing in particular, only one of those obscure Russian princesses who turn up here nowadays in such numbers." He ended by saying that I was wise in not attempting to compete with Lady S——, and that I was completely buried as far as Baden was concerned.

"I am sorry for her—unless indeed she takes a fancy to console herself with you," he added with a hard ringing laugh.

"If she goes away, I follow her"—the words were blurted out in an Italian accent.

"Happy man! he is still capable of a passion!" laughed the Frenchman.

"Passion!" said the other voice and then was still for a moment. "It is a necessity to me: I cannot live without it. To make life a romance is the one thing worth doing. And with me romance never breaks off in the middle, and this affair I shall carry through to the end."

"*Bonne chance, mon ami!*"[3] said the Frenchman.

They now turned a corner, and the voices stopped. Then we heard them coming down the steps, and a few minutes later they came out upon us by a side door. They were much surprised to see us. I blushed

[3]Good luck, my friend!

when the marquis approached me, and felt afraid when we left the castle and he offered me his arm. I could not refuse, and we set off for the carriage, walking behind Mme. M—— and his friend. I was mortified by what the Frenchman had said of me, though I secretly admitted that he had only put in words what I felt myself; but the plain speaking of the Italian had surprised and upset me by its coarseness. I was tormented by the thought that, though I had overheard him, he showed no fear of me. It was hateful to have him so close to me; and I walked fast after the other couple, not looking at him or answering him and trying to hold his arm in such a way as not to hear him. He spoke of the fine view, of the unexpected pleasure of our meeting, and so on; but I was not listening. My thoughts were with my husband, my child, my country; I felt ashamed distressed, anxious; I was in a hurry to get back to my solitary room in the Hôtel de Bade, there to think at leisure of the storm of feeling that had just risen in my heart. But Mme. M—— walked slowly, it was still a long way to the carriage, and my escort seemed to loiter on purpose as if he wished to detain me. "None of that!" I thought, and resolutely quickened my pace. But it soon became unmistakable that he was detaining me and even pressing my arm. Mme. M—— turned a corner, and we were quite alone. I was afraid.

"Excuse me," I said coldly and tried to free my arm; but the lace of my sleeve caught on a button of his coat. Bending towards me, he began to unfasten it, and his ungloved fingers touched my arm. A feeling new to me, half horror and half pleasure, sent an icy shiver down my back. I looked at him, intending by my coldness to convey all the contempt I felt for him; but my look expressed nothing but fear and excitement. His liquid blazing eyes, right up against my face, stared strangely at me, at my neck and breast; both his hands fingered my arm above the wrist; his parted lips were saying that he loved me, and that I was all the world to him; and those lips were coming nearer and nearer, and those hands were squeezing mine harder and harder and burning me. A fever ran through my veins, my sight grew dim, I trembled, and the words intended to check him died in my throat. Suddenly I felt a kiss on my cheek. Trembling all over and turning cold, I stood still and stared at him. Unable to speak or move, I stood there, horrified, expectant, even desirous. It was over in a moment, but the moment was horrible! In that short time I saw him exactly as he was—the low straight forehead (that forehead so like my husband's!) under the straw hat; the handsome regular nose and dilated nostrils; the long waxed moustache and short beard; the

close-shaved cheeks and sunburned neck. I hated and feared him; he was utterly repugnant and alien to me. And yet the excitement and passion of this hateful strange man raised a powerful echo in my own heart; I felt an irresistible longing to surrender myself to the kisses of that coarse handsome mouth, and to the pressure of those white hands with their delicate veins and jewelled fingers; I was tempted to throw myself headlong into the abyss of forbidden delights that had suddenly opened up before me.

"I am so unhappy already," I thought; "let more and more storms of unhappiness burst over my head!"

He put one arm round me and bent towards my face. "Better so!" I thought: "let sin and shame cover me ever deeper and deeper!"

"*Je vous aime!*"[4] he whispered in the voice which was so like my husband's. At once I thought of my husband and child, as creatures once precious to me who had now passed altogether out of my life. At that moment I heard Mme. M——'s voice; she called to me from round the corner. I came to myself, tore my hand away without looking at him, and almost ran after her: I only looked at him after she and I were already seated in the carriage. Then I saw him raise his hat and ask some commonplace question with a smile. He little knew the inexpressible aversion I felt for him at that moment.

My life seemed so wretched, the future so hopeless, the past so black! When Mme. M—— spoke, her words meant nothing to me. I thought that she talked only our of pity, and to hide the contempt I aroused in her. In every word and every look I seemed to detect this contempt and insulting pity. The shame of that kiss burned my cheek, and the thought of my husband and child was more than I could bear. When I was alone in my own room, I tried to think over my position; but I was afraid to be alone. Without drinking the tea which was brought me, and uncertain of my own motives, I got ready with feverish haste to catch the evening train and join my husband at Heidelberg.

I found seats for myself and my maid in an empty carriage. When the train started and the fresh air blew through the window on my face, I grew more composed and pictured my past and future to myself more clearly. The course of our married life from the time of our first visit to Petersburg now presented itself to me in a new light, and lay like a reproach on my conscience. For the first time I clearly recalled our start at Nikólskoe and our plans for the future; and for the first time

[4] I love you.

I asked myself what happiness had my husband had since then. I felt that I had behaved badly to him. "But why," I asked myself, "did he not stop me? Why did he make pretences? Why did he always avoid explanations? Why did he insult me? Why did he not use the power of his love to influence me? Or did he not love me?" But whether he was to blame or not, I still felt the kiss of that strange man upon my cheek. The nearer we got to Heidelberg, the clearer grew my picture of my husband, and the more I dreaded our meeting. "I shall tell him all," I thought, "and wipe out everything with tears of repentance; and he will forgive me." But I did not know myself what I meant by "everything"; and I did not believe in my heart that he would forgive me.

As soon as I entered my husband's room and saw his calm though surprised expression, I felt at once that I had nothing to tell him, no confession to make, and nothing to ask forgiveness for. I had to suppress my unspoken grief and penitence.

"What put this into your head?" he asked. "I meant to go to Baden tomorrow." Then he looked more closely at me and seemed to take alarm. "What's the matter with you? What has happened?" he said.

"Nothing at all," I replied, almost breaking down. "I am not going back. Let us go home, tomorrow if you like, to Russia."

For some time he said nothing but looked at me attentively. Then he said, "But do tell me what has happened to you."

I blushed involuntarily and looked down. There came into his eyes a flash of anger and displeasure. Afraid of what he might imagine, I said with a power of pretence that surprised myself:

"Nothing at all has happened. It was merely that I grew weary and sad by myself; and I have been thinking a great deal of our way of life and of you. I have long been to blame towards you. Why do you take me abroad, when you can't bear it yourself? I have long been to blame. Let us go back to Nikólskoe and settle there forever."

"Spare us these sentimental scenes, my dear," he said coldly. "To go back to Nikólskoe is a good idea, for our money is running short; but the notion of stopping there 'forever' is fanciful. I know you would not settle down. Have some tea, and you will feel better," and he rose to ring for the waiter.

I imagined all he might be thinking about me; and I was offended by the horrible thoughts which I ascribed to him when I encountered the dubious and shamefaced look he directed at me. "He will not and cannot understand me." I said I would go and look at the child, and I

left the room. I wished to be alone, and to cry and cry and cry …

IV

The house at Nikólskoe, so long unheated and uninhabited, came to life again; but much of the past was dead beyond recall. Tatyána Semënovna was no more, and we were now alone together. But far from desiring such close companionship, we even found it irksome. To me that winter was the more trying because I was in bad health, from which I only recovered after the birth of my second son. My husband and I were still on the same terms as during our life in Petersburg: we were coldly friendly to each other; but in the country each room and wall and sofa recalled what he had once been to me, and what I had lost. It was if some unforgiven grievance held us apart, as if he were punishing me and pretending not to be aware of it. But there was nothing to ask pardon for, no penalty to deprecate; my punishment was merely this, that he did not give his whole heart and mind to me as he used to do; but he did not give it to anyone or to anything; as though he had no longer a heart to give. Sometimes it occurred to me that he was only pretending to be like that, in order to hurt me, and that the old feeling was still alive in his breast; and I tried to call it forth. But I always failed: he always seemed to avoid frankness, evidently suspecting me of insincerity, and dreading the folly of any emotional display. I could read in his face and the tone of his voice, "What is the good of talking? I know all the facts already, and I know what is on the tip of your tongue, and I know that you will say one thing and do another." At first I was mortified by his dread of frankness, but I came later to think that it was rather the absence, on his part, of any need of frankness. It would never have occurred to me now, to tell him of a sudden that I loved him, or to ask him to repeat the prayers with me or listen while I played the piano. Our intercourse came to be regulated by a fixed code of good manners. We lived our separate lives: he had his own occupations in which I was not needed, and which I no longer wished to share, while I continued my idle life which no longer vexed or grieved him. The children were still too young to form a bond between us.

But spring came round and brought Kátya and Sónya to spend the summer with us in the country. As the house at Nikólskoe was under repair, we went to live at my old home at Pokróvskoe. The old house was unchanged—the veranda, the folding table and the piano in the sunny drawing room, and my old bedroom with its white curtains

and the dreams of my girlhood which I seemed to have left behind me there. In that room there were two beds: one had been mine, and in it now my plump little Kokósha lay sprawling, when I went at night to sign him with the cross; the other was a crib, in which the little face of my baby, Ványa, peeped out from his swaddling clothes. Often when I had made the sign over them and remained standing in the middle of the quiet room, suddenly there rose up from all the corners, from the walls and curtains, old forgotten visions of youth. Old voices began to sing the songs of my girlhood. Where were those visions now? where were those dear old sweet songs? All that I had hardly dared to hope for had come to pass. My vague confused dreams had become a reality, and the reality had become an oppressive, difficult, and joyless life. All remained the same—the garden visible through the window, the grass, the path, the very same bench over there above the dell, the same song of the nightingale by the pond, the same lilacs in full bloom, the same moon shining above the house; and yet, in everything such a terrible inconceivable change! Such coldness in all that might have been near and dear! Just as in old times Kátya and I sit quietly alone together in the parlour and talk, and talk of him. But Kátya has grown wrinkled and pale; and her eyes no longer shine with joy and hope, but express only sympathy, sorrow, and regret. We do not go into raptures as we used to, we judge him coolly; we do not wonder what we have done to deserve such happiness, or long to proclaim our thoughts to all the world. No! we whisper together like conspirators and ask each other for the hundredth time why all has changed so sadly. Yet he was still the same man, save for the deeper furrow between his eyebrows and the whiter hair on his temples; but his serious attentive look was constantly veiled from me by a cloud. And I am the same woman, but without love or desire for love, with no longing for work and not content with myself. My religious ecstasies, my love for my husband, the fullness of my former life—all these now seem utterly remote and visionary. Once it seemed so plain and right that to live for others was happiness; but now it has become unintelligible. Why live for others, when life had no attraction even for oneself?

I had given up my music altogether since the time of our first visit to Petersburg; but now the old piano and the old music tempted me to begin again.

One day I was not well and stayed indoors alone. My husband had taken Kátya and Sónya to see the new buildings at Nikólskoe. Tea was laid; I went downstairs and while waiting for them sat down at the piano. I opened the *Moonlight Sonata* and began to play. There was no

one within sight or sound, the windows were open over the garden, and the familiar sounds floated through the room with a solemn sadness. At the end of the first movement I looked round instinctively to the corner where he used once to sit and listen to my playing. He was not there; his chair, long unmoved, was still in its place; through the window I could see a lilac bush against the light of the setting sun; the freshness of evening streamed in through the open windows. I rested my elbows on the piano and covered my face with both hands; and so I sat for a long time, thinking. I recalled with pain the irrevocable past, and timidly imagined the future. But for me there seemed to be no future, no desires at all and no hopes. "Can life be over for me?" I thought with horror; then I looked up, and, trying to forget and not to think, I began playing the same movement over again. "Oh, God!" I prayed, "forgive me if I have sinned, or restore to me all that once blossomed in my heart, or teach me what to do and how to live now." There was a sound of wheels on the grass and before the steps of the house; then I heard cautious and familiar footsteps pass along the veranda and cease; but my heart no longer replied to the sound. When I stopped playing the footsteps were behind me and a hand was laid on my shoulder.

"How clever of you to think of playing that!" he said.

I said nothing.

"Have you had tea?" he asked.

I shook my head without looking at him—I was unwilling to let him see the signs of emotion on my face.

"They'll be here immediately," he said; "the horse gave trouble, and they got out on the high road to walk home."

"Let us wait for them," I said, and went out to the veranda, hoping that he would follow; but he asked about the children and went upstairs to see them. Once more his presence and simple kindly voice made me doubt if I had really lost anything. What more could I wish? "He is kind and gentle, a good husband, a good father; I don't know myself what more I want." I sat down under the veranda awning on the very bench on which I had sat when we became engaged. The sun had set, it was growing dark, and a little spring rain cloud hung over the house and garden, and only behind the trees the horizon was clear, with the fading glow of twilight, in which one star had just begun to twinkle. The landscape, covered by the shadow of the cloud, seemed waiting for the light spring shower. There was not a breath of wind; not a single leaf or blade of grass stirred; the scent of lilac and bird cherry was so strong in the garden and veranda that it seemed as if all the

air was in flower; it came in wafts, now stronger and now weaker, till one longed to shut both eyes and ears and drink in that fragrance only. The dahlias and rose bushes, not yet in flower, stood motionless on the black mould of the border, looking as if they were growing slowly upwards on their white-shaved props; beyond the dell, the frogs were making the most of their time before the rain drove them to the pond, croaking busily and loudly. Only the high continuous note of water falling at some distance rose above their croaking. From time to time the nightingales called to one another, and I could hear them flitting restlessly from bush to bush. Again this spring a nightingale had tried to build in a bush under the window, and I heard her fly off across the avenue when I went into the veranda. From there she whistled once and then stopped; she, too, was expecting the rain.

I tried in vain to calm my feelings: I had a sense of anticipation and regret.

He came downstairs again and sat down beside me.

"I am afraid they will get wet," he said.

"Yes," I answered; and we sat for long without speaking.

The cloud came down lower and lower with no wind. The air grew stiller and more fragrant. Suddenly a drop fell on the canvas awning and seemed to rebound from it; then another broke on the gravel path; soon there was a splash on the burdock leaves, and a fresh shower of big drops came down faster and faster. Nightingales and frogs were both dumb; only the high note of the falling water, though the rain made it seem more distant, still went on; and a bird, which must have sheltered among the dry leaves near the veranda, steadily repeated its two unvarying notes. My husband got up to go in.

"Where are you going?" I asked, trying to keep him; "it is so pleasant here."

"We must send them an umbrella and galoshes," he replied.

"Don't trouble—it will soon be over."

He thought I was right, and we remained together in the veranda. I rested one hand upon the wet slippery rail and put my head out. The fresh rain wetted my hair and neck in places. The cloud, growing lighter and thinner, was passing overhead; the steady patter of the rain gave place to occasional drops that fell from the sky or dripped from the trees. The frogs began to croak again in the dell; the nightingales woke up and began to call from the dripping bushes from one side and then from another. The whole prospect before us grew clear.

"How delightful!" he said, seating himself on the veranda rail and passing a hand over my wet hair.

This simple caress had on me the effect of a reproach: I felt inclined to cry.

"What more can a man need?" he said; "I am so content now that I want nothing; I am perfectly happy!"

He told me a different story once, I thought. He had said that, however great his happiness might be, he always wanted more and more. Now he is calm and contented; while my heart is full of unspoken repentance and unshed tears.

"I think it delightful too," I said; "but I am sad just because of the beauty of it all. All is so fair and lovely outside me, while my own heart is confused and baffled and full of vague unsatisfied longing. Is it possible that there is no element of pain, no yearning for the past, in your enjoyment of nature?"

He took his hand off my head and was silent for a little.

"I used to feel that too," he said, as though recalling it, "especially in spring. I used to sit up all night too, with my hopes and fears for company, and good company they were! But life was all before me then. Now it is all behind me, and I am content with what I have. I find life capital," he added with such careless confidence, that I believed, whatever pain it gave me to hear it, that it was the truth.

"But is there nothing you wish for?" I asked.

"I don't ask for impossibilities," he said, guessing my thoughts. "You go and get your head wet," he added, stroking my head like a child's and again passing his hand over the wet hair; "you envy the leaves and the grass their wetting from the rain, and you would like yourself to be the grass and the leaves and the rain. But I am contented to enjoy them and everything else that is good and young and happy."

"And do you regret nothing of the past?" I asked, while my heart grew heavier and heavier.

Again he thought for a time before replying. I saw that he wished to reply with perfect frankness.

"Nothing," he said shortly.

"Not true! not true!" I said, turning towards him and looking into his eyes. "Do you really not regret the past?"

"No!" he repeated; "I am grateful for it, but I don't regret it."

"But would you not like to have it back?" I asked.

"No; I might as well wish to have wings. It is impossible."

"And would you not alter the past? do you not reproach yourself or me?"

"No, never! It was all for the best."

"Listen to me!" I said touching his arm to make him look round.

"Why did you never tell me that you wished me to live as you really wished me to? Why did you give me a freedom for which I was unfit? Why did you stop teaching me? If you had wished it, if you had guided me differently, none of all this would have happened!" said I in a voice that increasingly expressed cold displeasure and reproach in place of the love of former days.

"What would not have happened?" he asked, turning to me in surprise. "As it is, there is nothing wrong. Things are all right, quite all right," he added with a smile.

"Does he really not understand?" I thought; "or still worse, does he not wish to understand?"

Then I suddenly broke out. "Had you acted differently, I should not now be punished, for no fault at all, by your indifference and even contempt, and you would not have taken from me unjustly all that I valued in life!"

"What do you mean, my dear one?" he asked—he seemed not to understand me.

"No! don't interrupt me! You have taken from me your confidence, your love, even your respect; for I cannot believe, when I think of the past, that you still love me. No! don't speak! I must once for all say out what has long been torturing me. Is it my fault that I knew nothing of life, and that you left me to learn experience for myself? Is it my fault that now, when I have gained the knowledge and have been struggling for nearly a year to come back to you, you push me away and pretend not to understand what I want? And you always do it so that it is impossible to reproach you, while I am guilty and unhappy. Yes, you wish to drive me out again to that life which might rob us both of happiness."

"How did I show that?" he asked in evident alarm and surprise.

"No later than yesterday you said, and you constantly say, that I can never settle down here, and that we must spend this winter too at Petersburg; and I hate Petersburg!" I went on, "Instead of supporting me, you avoid all plain speaking, you never say a single frank affectionate word to me. And then, when I fall utterly, you will reproach me and rejoice in my fall."

"Stop!" he said with cold severity. "You have no right to say that. It only proves that you are ill-disposed towards me, that you don't …"

"That I don't love you? Don't hesitate to say it!" I cried, and the tears began to flow. I sat down on the bench and covered my face with my handkerchief.

"So that is how he understood me!" I thought, trying to restrain

the sobs which choked me. "Gone, gone is our former love!" said a voice at my heart. He did not come close or try to comfort me. He was hurt by what I had said. When he spoke, his tone was cool and dry.

"I don't know what you reproach me with," he began. "If you mean that I don't love you as I once did …"

"Did love!" I said, with my face buried in the handkerchief, while the bitter tears fell still more abundantly.

"If so, time is to blame for that, and we ourselves. Each time of life has its own kind of love." He was silent for a moment. "Shall I tell you the whole truth, if you really wish for frankness? In that summer when I first knew you, I used to lie awake all night, thinking about you, and I made that love myself, and it grew and grew in my heart. So again, in Petersburg and abroad, in the course of horrible sleepless nights, I strove to shatter and destroy that love, which had come to torture me. I did not destroy it, but I destroyed that part of it which gave me pain. Then I grew calm; and I feel love still, but it is a different kind of love."

"You call it love, but I call it torture!" I said. "Why did you allow me to go into society, if you thought so badly of it that you ceased to love me on that account?"

"No, it was not society, my dear," he said.

"Why did you not exercise your authority?" I went on: "why did you not lock me up or kill me? That would have been better than the loss of all that formed my happiness. I should have been happy, instead of being ashamed."

I began to sob again and hid my face.

Just then Kátya and Sónya, wet and cheerful, came out to the veranda, laughing and talking loudly. They were silent as soon as they saw us, and went in again immediately.

We remained silent for a long time. I had had my cry out and felt relieved. I glanced at him. He was sitting with his head resting on his hand; he intended to make some reply to my glance, but only sighed deeply and resumed his former position.

I went up to him and removed his hand. His eyes turned thoughtfully to my face.

"Yes," he began, as if continuing his thoughts aloud, "all of us, and especially you women, must have personal experience of all the nonsense of life, in order to get back to life itself; the evidence of other people is no good. At that time you had not got near the end of that charming nonsense which I admired in you. So I let you go through it alone, feeling that I had no right to put pressure on you, though my

own time for that sort of thing was long past."

"If you loved me," I said, "how could you stand beside me and suffer me to go through it?"

"Because it was impossible for you to take my word for it, though you would have tried to. Personal experience was necessary, and now you have had it."

"There was much calculation in all that," I said, "but little love."

And again we were silent.

"What you said just now is severe, but it is true," he began, rising suddenly and beginning to walk about the veranda. "Yes, it is true. I was to blame," he added, stopping opposite me; "I ought either to have kept myself from loving you at all, or to have loved you in a simpler way."

"Let us forget it all," I said timidly.

"No," he said; "the past can never come back, never;" and his voice softened as he spoke.

"It is restored already," I said, laying a hand on his shoulder.

He took my hand away and pressed it.

"I was wrong when I said that I did not regret the past. I do regret it; I weep for that past love which can never return. Who is to blame, I do not know. Love remains, but not the old love; its place remains, but it all wasted away and has lost all strength and substance; recollections are still left, and gratitude; but …"

"Do not say that!" I broke in. "Let all be as it was before! Surely that is possible?" I asked, looking into his eyes; but their gaze was clear and calm, and did not look deeply into mine.

Even while I spoke, I knew that my wishes and my petition were impossible. He smiled calmly and gently; and I thought it the smile of an old man.

"How young you are still!" he said, "and I am so old. What you seek in me is no longer there. Why deceive ourselves?" he added, still smiling.

I stood silent opposite to him, and my heart grew calmer.

"Don't let us try to repeat life," he went on. "Don't let us make pretences to ourselves. Let us be thankful that there is an end of the old emotions and excitements. The excitement of searching is over for us; our quest is done, and happiness enough has fallen to our lot. Now we must stand aside and make room—for him, if you like," he said, pointing to the nurse who was carrying Ványa out and had stopped at the veranda door. "That's the truth, my dear one," he said, drawing down my head and kissing it, not a lover any longer but an old friend.

The fragrant freshness of the night rose ever stronger and sweeter from the garden; the sounds and the silence grew more solemn; star after star began to twinkle overhead. I looked at him, and suddenly my heart grew light; it seemed that the cause of my suffering had been removed like an aching nerve. Suddenly I realized clearly and calmly that the past feeling, like the past time itself, was gone beyond recall, and that it would be not only impossible but painful and uncomfortable to bring it back. And after all, was that time so good which seemed to me so happy? and it was all so long, long ago!

"Time for tea!" he said, and we went together to the parlour. At the door we met the nurse with the baby. I took him in my arms, covered his bare little red legs, pressed him to me, and kissed him with the lightest touch of my lips. Half asleep, he moved the parted fingers of one creased little hand and opened dim little eyes, as if he was looking for something or recalling something. All at once his eyes rested on me, a spark of consciousness shone in them, the little pouting lips, parted before, now met and opened in a smile. "Mine, mine, mine!" I thought, pressing him to my breast with such an impulse of joy in every limb that I found it hard to restrain myself from hurting him. I fell to kissing the cold little feet, his stomach and hand and head with its thin covering of down. My husband came up to me, and I quickly covered the child's face and uncovered it again.

"Iván Sergéich!" said my husband, tickling him under the chin. But I made haste to cover Iván Sergéich up again. None but I had any business to look long at him. I glanced at my husband. His eyes smiled as he looked at me; and I looked into them with an ease and happiness which I had not felt for a long time.

That day ended the romance of our marriage; the old feeling became a precious irrecoverable remembrance; but a new feeling of love for my children and the father of my children laid the foundation of a new life and a quite different happiness; and that life and happiness have lasted to the present time.

God Sees the Truth, But Waits

In the town of Vladímir lived a young merchant named Iván Dmítritch Aksyónof. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Aksyónof was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been

given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksyónof was going to the Nízhny Fair, and as he bade goodbye to his family his wife said to him, "Iván Dmítritch, do not start today; I have had a bad dream about you."

Aksyónof laughed, and said, "You are afraid that when I get to the fair I shall go on the spree."

His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream. I dreamt you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite grey."

Aksyónof laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods, and bring you some presents from the fair."

So he said goodbye to his family, and drove away.

When he had travelled halfway, he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Aksyónof's habit to sleep late, and, wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused his driver before dawn, and told him to put in the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey.

When he had gone about twenty-five miles, he stopped for the horses to be fed. Aksyónof rested awhile in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch, and, ordering a samovar[5] to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troika[6] drove up with tinkling bells, and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Aksyónof and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Aksyónof answered him fully, and said, "Won't you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him, "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow-merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

Aksyónof wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am travelling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me."

[5]The samovar ("self-boiler") is an urn in which water can be heated and kept on the boil.

[6]A three-horse conveyance.

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said, "I am the police-officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police-officer unstrapped Aksyónof's luggage and searched it. Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksyónof looked, and seeing a bloodstained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

"How is it there is blood on this knife?"

Aksyónof tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: "I—I don't know—not mine."

Then the police-officer said, "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only person who could have done it. The house was locked from inside, and no one else was there. Here is this bloodstained knife in your bag, and your face and manner betray you! Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole?"

Aksyónof swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand roubles[7] of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he were guilty.

The police-officer ordered the soldiers to bind Aksyónof and to put him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Aksyónof crossed himself and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Enquiries as to his character were made in Vladímir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a good man. Then the trial came on: he was charged with murdering a merchant from Ryazán, and robbing him of twenty thousand roubles.

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in gaol. At first she was not allowed to see him; but, after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken to him. When

[7]The value of the rouble has varied at different times from more than three shillings to less than two shillings. For the purposes of ready calculation it may be taken as two shillings. In reading these stories to children, the word "florin" can be substituted for "rouble" if prefered.

she saw her husband in prison-dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down, and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her, and sat down near him. She told him of things at home, and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked, "What can we do now?"

"We must petition the Tsar not to let an innocent man perish."

His wife told him that she had sent a petition to the Tsar, but that it had not been accepted.

Aksyónof did not reply, but only looked downcast.

Then his wife said, "It was not for nothing I dreamt your hair had turned grey. You remember? You should not have started that day." And passing her fingers through his hair, she said: "Ványa dearest, tell your wife the truth; was it not you who did it?"

"So you, too, suspect me!" said Aksyónof, and, hiding his face in his hands, he began to weep. Then a soldier came to say that the wife and children must go away; and Aksyónof said goodbye to his family for the last time.

When they were gone, Aksyónof recalled what had been said, and when he remembered that his wife also had suspected him, he said to himself, "It seems that only God can know the truth; it is to Him alone we must appeal, and from Him alone expect mercy."

And Aksyónof wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope, and only prayed to God.

Aksyónof was condemned to be flogged and sent to the mines. So he was flogged with a knout, and when the wounds made by the knout were healed, he was driven to Siberia with other convicts.

For twenty-six years Aksyónof lived as a convict in Siberia. His hair turned white as snow, and his beard grew long, thin, and grey. All his mirth went; he stooped; he walked slowly, spoke little, and never laughed, but he often prayed.

In prison Aksyónof learnt to make boots, and earned a little money, with which he bought *The Lives of the Saints*. He read this book when there was light enough in the prison; and on Sundays in the prison-church he read the lessons and sang in the choir; for his voice was still good.

The prison authorities liked Aksyónof for his meekness, and his fellow-prisoners respected him: they called him "Grandfather," and "The Saint." When they wanted to petition the prison authorities about anything, they always made Aksyónof their spokesman, and when there were quarrels among the prisoners they came to him to put things right, and to judge the matter.

No news reached Aksyónof from his home, and he did not even know if his wife and children were still alive.

One day a fresh gang of convicts came to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners collected round the new ones and asked them what towns or villages they came from, and what they were sentenced for. Among the rest Aksyónof sat down near the newcomers, and listened with downcast air to what was said.

One of the new convicts, a tall, strong man of sixty, with a closely-cropped grey beard, was telling the others what he had been arrested for.

"Well, friends," he said, "I only took a horse that was tied to a sledge, and I was arrested and accused of stealing. I said I had only taken it to get home quicker, and had then let it go; besides, the driver was a personal friend of mine. So I said, 'It's all right.' 'No,' said they, 'you stole it.' But how or where I stole it they could not say. I once really did something wrong, and ought by rights to have come here long ago, but that time I was not found out. Now I have been sent here for nothing at all. … Eh, but it's lies I'm telling you; I've been to Siberia before, but I did not stay long."

"Where are you from?" asked someone.

"From Vladímir. My family are of that town. My name is Makár, and they also call me Semyónitch."

Aksyónof raised his head and said: "Tell me, Semyónitch, do you know anything of the merchants Aksyónof, of Vladímir? Are they still alive?"

"Know them? Of course I do. The Aksyónofs are rich, though their father is in Siberia: a sinner like ourselves, it seems! As for you, Gran'dad, how did you come here?"

Aksyónof did not like to speak of his misfortune. He only sighed, and said, "For my sins I have been in prison these twenty-six years."

"What sins?" asked Makár Semyónitch.

But Aksyónof only said, "Well, well—I must have deserved it!" He would have said no more, but his companions told the newcomer how Aksyónof came to be in Siberia: how someone had killed a merchant, and had put a knife among Aksyónof's things, and Aksyónof had been unjustly condemned.

When Makár Semyónitch heard this, he looked at Aksyónof, slapped his own knee, and exclaimed, "Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you've grown, Gran'dad!"

The others asked him why he was so surprised, and where he had seen Aksyónof before; but Makár Semyónitch did not reply. He only

said: "It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

These words made Aksyónof wonder whether this man knew who had killed the merchant; so he said, "Perhaps, Semyónitch, you have heard of that affair, or maybe you've seen me before?"

"How could I help hearing? The world's full of rumours. But it's long ago, and I've forgotten what I heard."

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksyónof.

Makár Semyónitch laughed, and replied, "It must have been him in whose bag the knife was found! If someone else hid the knife there, 'He's not a thief till he's caught,' as the saying is. How could anyone put a knife into your bag while it was under your head? It would surely have woke you up?"

When Aksyónof heard these words, he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Aksyónof lay awake. He felt terribly unhappy, and all sorts of images rose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite little, as they were at that time: one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast. And then he remembered himself as he used to be—young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar in the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

"And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Aksyónof. And his anger was so great against Makár Semyónitch that he longed for vengeance, even if he himself should perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could get no peace. During the day he did not go near Makár Semyónitch, nor even look at him.

A fortnight passed in this way. Aksyónof could not sleep at nights, and was so miserable that he did not know what to do.

One night as he was walking about the prison he noticed some earth that came rolling out from under one of the shelves on which the prisoners slept. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makár Semyónitch crept out from under the shelf, and looked up at Aksyónof with frightened face. Aksyónof tried to pass without looking at him, but Makár seized his hand and told him that he had dug a hole under the wall, getting rid of the earth by putting it into his high-boots, and

emptying it out every day on the road when the prisoners were driven to their work.

"Just you keep quiet, old man, and you shall get out too. If you blab they'll flog the life out of me, but I will kill you first."

Aksyónof trembled with anger as he looked at his enemy. He drew his hand away, saying, "I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago! As to telling of you—I may do so or not, as God shall direct."

Next day, when the convicts were led out to work, the convoy soldiers noticed that one or other of the prisoners emptied some earth out of his boots. The prison was searched, and the tunnel found. The Governor came and questioned all the prisoners to find out who had dug the hole. They all denied any knowledge of it. Those who knew, would not betray Makár Semyónitch, knowing he would be flogged almost to death. At last the Governor turned to Aksyónof, whom he knew to be a just man, and said:

"You are a truthful old man; tell me, before God, who dug the hole?"

Makár Semyónitch stood as if he were quite unconcerned, looking at the Governor and not so much as glancing at Aksyónof. Aksyónof's lips and hands trembled, and for a long time he could not utter a word. He thought, "Why should I screen him who ruined my life? Let him pay for what I have suffered. But if I tell, they will probably flog the life out of him, and maybe I suspect him wrongly. And, after all, what good would it be to me?"

"Well, old man," repeated the Governor, "tell us the truth: who has been digging under the wall?"

Aksyónof glanced at Makár Semyónitch, and said, "I cannot say, your honour. It is not God's will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am in your hands."

However much the Governor tried, Aksyónof would say no more, and so the matter had to be left.

That night, when Aksyónof was lying on his bed and just beginning to doze, someone came quietly and sat down on his bed. He peered through the darkness and recognized Makár.

"What more do you want of me?" asked Aksyónof. "Why have you come here?"

Makár Semyónitch was silent. So Aksyónof sat up and said, "What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!"

Makár Semyónitch bent close over Aksyónof, and whispered, "Iván Dmítritch, forgive me!"

"What for?" asked Aksyónof.

"It was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife among your things. I meant to kill you too, but I heard a noise outside; so I hid the knife in your bag and escaped out of the window."

Aksyónof was silent, and did not know what to say. Makár Semyónitch slid off the bed-shelf and knelt upon the ground. "Iván Dmítritch," said he, "forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home."

"It is easy for you to talk," said Aksyónof, "but I have suffered for you these twenty-six years. Where could I go to now? … My wife is dead, and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go. …"

Makár Semyónitch did not rise, but beat his head on the floor. "Iván Dmítritch, forgive me!" he cried. "When they flogged me with the knout it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now … yet you had pity on me, and did not tell. For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch that I am!" And he began to sob.

When Aksyónof heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep.

"God will forgive you!" said he. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words his heart grew light, and the longing for home left him. He no longer had any desire to leave the prison, but only hoped for his last hour to come.

In spite of what Aksyónof had said, Makár Semyónitch confessed his guilt. But when the order for his release came, Aksyónof was already dead.

The Death of Ivan Ilyitch

I

Inside the great building of the Law Courts, during the interval in the hearing of the Melvinsky case, the members of the judicial council and the public prosecutor were gathered together in the private room of Ivan Yegorovitch Shebek, and the conversation turned upon the celebrated Krasovsky case. Fyodor Vassilievitch hotly maintained that the case was not in the jurisdiction of the court. Yegor Ivanovitch stood up for his own view; but from the first Pyotr Ivanovitch, who had not entered into the discussion, took no interest in it, but was looking through the newspapers which had just been brought in.

"Gentlemen!" he said, "Ivan Ilyitch is dead!"

"You don't say so!"

"Here, read it," he said to Fyodor Vassilievitch, handing him the fresh still damp-smelling paper.

Within a black margin was printed: "Praskovya Fyodorovna Golovin with heartfelt affliction informs friends and relatives of the decease of her beloved husband, member of the Court of Justice, Ivan Ilyitch Golovin, who passed away on the 4th of February. The funeral will take place on Thursday at one o'clock."

Ivan Ilyitch was a colleague of the gentlemen present, and all liked him. It was some weeks now since he had been taken ill; his illness had been said to be incurable. His post had been kept open for him, but it had been thought that in case of his death Alexyeev might receive his appointment, and either Vinnikov or Shtabel would succeed to Alexyeev's. So that on hearing of Ivan Ilyitch's death, the first thought of each of the gentlemen in the room was of the effect this death might have on the transfer or promotion of themselves or their friends.

"Now I am sure of getting Shtabel's place or Vinnikov's," thought Fyodor Vassilievitch. "It was promised me long ago, and the promotion means eight hundred roubles additional income, besides the grants for office expenses."

"Now I shall have to petition for my brother-in-law to be transferred from Kaluga," thought Pyotr Ivanovitch. "My wife will be very glad. She won't be able to say now that I've never done anything for her family."

"I thought somehow that he'd never get up from his bed again," Pyotr Ivanovitch said aloud. "I'm sorry!"

"But what was it exactly that was wrong with him?"

"The doctors could not decide. That's to say, they did decide, but differently. When I saw him last, I thought he would get over it."

"Well, I positively haven't called there ever since the holidays. I've kept meaning to go."

"Had he any property?"

"I think there's something, very small, of his wife's. But something quite trifling."

"Yes, one will have to go and call. They live such a terribly long way off."

"A long way from you, you mean. Everything's a long way from your place."

"There, he can never forgive me for living the other side of the river," said Pyotr Ivanovitch, smiling at Shebek. And they began to

talk of the great distances between different parts of the town, and went back into the court.

Besides the reflections upon the changes and promotions in the service likely to ensue from this death, the very fact of the death of an intimate acquaintance excited in everyone who heard of it, as such a fact always does, a feeling of relief that "it is he that is dead, and not I."

"Only think! he is dead, but here am I all right," each one thought or felt. The more intimate acquaintances, the so-called friends of Ivan Ilyitch, could not help thinking too that now they had the exceedingly tiresome social duties to perform of going to the funeral service and paying the widow a visit of condolence.

The most intimately acquainted with their late colleague were Fyodor Vassilievitch and Pyotr Ivanovitch.

Pyotr Ivanovitch had been a comrade of his at the school of jurisprudence, and considered himself under obligations to Ivan Ilyitch.

Telling his wife at dinner of the news of Ivan Ilyitch's death and his reflections as to the possibility of getting her brother transferred into their circuit, Pyotr Ivanovitch, without lying down for his usual nap, put on his frockcoat and drove to Ivan Ilyitch's.

At the entrance before Ivan Ilyitch's flat stood a carriage and two hired flies. Downstairs in the entry near the hatstand there was leaning against the wall a coffin-lid with tassels and braiding freshly rubbed up with pipeclay. Two ladies were taking off their cloaks. One of them he knew, the sister of Ivan Ilyitch; the other was a lady he did not know. Pyotr Ivanovitch's colleague, Shvarts, was coming down; and from the top stair, seeing who it was coming in, he stopped and winked at him, as though to say: "Ivan Ilyitch has made a mess of it; it's a very different matter with you and me."

Shvarts's face, with his English whiskers and all his thin figure in his frockcoat, had, as it always had, an air of elegant solemnity; and this solemnity, always such a contrast to Shvarts's playful character, had a special piquancy here. So thought Pyotr Ivanovitch.

Pyotr Ivanovitch let the ladies pass on in front of him, and walked slowly up the stairs after them. Shvarts had not come down, but was waiting at the top. Pyotr Ivanovitch knew what for; he wanted obviously to settle with him where their game of "screw" was to be that evening. The ladies went up to the widow's room; while Shvarts, with his lips tightly and gravely shut, and amusement in his eyes, with a twitch of his eyebrows motioned Pyotr Ivanovitch to the right, to the room where the dead man was.

Pyotr Ivanovitch went in, as people always do on such occasions, in uncertainty as to what he would have to do there. One thing he felt sure of—that crossing oneself never comes amiss on such occasions. As to whether it was necessary to bow down while doing so, he did not feel quite sure, and so chose a middle course. On entering the room he began crossing himself, and made a slight sort of bow. So far as the movements of his hands and head permitted him, he glanced while doing so about the room. Two young men, one a high school boy, nephews probably, were going out of the room, crossing themselves. An old lady was standing motionless; and a lady, with her eyebrows queerly lifted, was saying something to her in a whisper. A deacon in a frockcoat, resolute and hearty, was reading something aloud with an expression that precluded all possibility of contradiction. A young peasant who used to wait at table, Gerasim, walking with light footsteps in front of Pyotr Ivanovitch, was sprinkling something on the floor. Seeing this, Pyotr Ivanovitch was at once aware of the faint odour of the decomposing corpse. On his last visit to Ivan Ilyitch Pyotr Ivanovitch had seen this peasant in his room; he was performing the duties of a sicknurse, and Ivan Ilyitch liked him particularly. Pyotr Ivanovitch continued crossing himself and bowing in a direction intermediate between the coffin, the deacon, and the holy pictures on the table in the corner. Then when this action of making the sign of the cross with his hand seemed to him to have been unduly prolonged, he stood still and began to scrutinise the dead man.

The dead man lay, as dead men always do lie, in a peculiarly heavy dead way, his stiffened limbs sunk in the cushions of the coffin, and his head bent back forever on the pillow, and thrust up, as dead men always do, his yellow waxen forehead with bald spots on the sunken temples, and his nose that stood out sharply and as it were squeezed on the upper lip. He was much changed, even thinner since Pyotr Ivanovitch had seen him, but his face—as always with the dead—was more handsome, and, above all, more impressive than it had been when he was alive. On the face was an expression of what had to be done having been done, and rightly done. Besides this, there was too in that expression a reproach or a reminder for the living. This reminder seemed to Pyotr Ivanovitch uncalled for, or, at least, to have nothing to do with him. He felt something unpleasant; and so Pyotr Ivanovitch once more crossed himself hurriedly, and, as it struck him, too hurriedly, not quite in accordance with the proprieties, turned and went to the door. Shvarts was waiting for him in the adjoining room, standing with his legs apart and both hands behind his back playing

with his top hat. A single glance at the playful, sleek, and elegant figure of Shvarts revived Pyotr Ivanovitch. He felt that he, Shvarts, was above it, and would not give way to depressing impressions. The mere sight of him said plainly: the incident of the service over the body of Ivan Ilyitch cannot possibly constitute a sufficient ground for recognising the business of the session suspended—in other words, in no way can it hinder us from shuffling and cutting a pack of cards this evening, while the footman sets four unsanctified candles on the table for us; in fact, there is no ground for supposing that this incident could prevent us from spending the evening agreeably. He said as much indeed to Pyotr Ivanovitch as he came out, proposing that the party should meet at Fyodor Vassilievitch's. But apparently it was Pyotr Ivanovitch's destiny not to play "screw" that evening. Praskovya Fyodorovna, a short, fat woman who, in spite of all efforts in a contrary direction, was steadily broader from her shoulders downwards, all in black, with lace on her head and her eyebrows as queerly arched as the lady standing beside the coffin, came out of her own apartments with some other ladies, and conducting them to the dead man's room, said: "The service will take place immediately; come in."

Shvarts, making an indefinite bow, stood still, obviously neither accepting nor declining this invitation. Praskovya Fyodorovna, recognising Pyotr Ivanovitch, sighed, went right up to him, took his hand, and said, "I know that you were a true friend of Ivan Ilyitch's …" and looked at him, expecting from him the suitable action in response to these words. Pyotr Ivanovitch knew that, just as before he had to cross himself, now what he had to do was to press her hand, to sigh and to say, "Ah, I was indeed!" And he did so. And as he did so, he felt that the desired result had been attained; that he was touched, and she was touched.

"Come, since it's not begun yet, I have something I want to say to you," said the widow. "Give me your arm."

Pyotr Ivanovitch gave her his arm, and they moved towards the inner rooms, passing Shvarts, who winked gloomily at Pyotr Ivanovitch.

"So much for our 'screw'! Don't complain if we find another partner. You can make a fifth when you do get away," said his humorous glance.

Pyotr Ivanovitch sighed still more deeply and despondently, and Praskovya Fyodorovna pressed his hand gratefully. Going into her drawing-room, that was upholstered with pink cretonne and lighted by a dismal-looking lamp, they sat down at the table, she on a sofa and Pyotr Ivanovitch on a low ottoman with deranged springs which yielded spasmodically under his weight. Praskovya Fyodorovna was

about to warn him to sit on another seat, but felt such a recommendation out of keeping with her position, and changed her mind. Sitting down on the ottoman, Pyotr Ivanovitch remembered how Ivan Ilyitch had arranged this drawing-room, and had consulted him about this very pink cretonne with green leaves. Seating herself on the sofa, and pushing by the table (the whole drawing-room was crowded with furniture and things), the widow caught the lace of her black fichu in the carving of the table. Pyotr Ivanovitch got up to disentangle it for her; and the ottoman, freed from his weight, began bobbing up spasmodically under him. The widow began unhooking her lace herself, and Pyotr Ivanovitch again sat down, suppressing the mutinous ottoman springs under him. But the widow could not quite free herself, and Pyotr Ivanovitch rose again, and again the ottoman became mutinous and popped up with a positive snap. When this was all over, she took out a clean cambric handkerchief and began weeping. Ivanovitch had been chilled off by the incident with the lace and the struggle with the ottoman springs, and he sat looking sullen. This awkward position was cut short by the entrance of Sokolov, Ivan Ilyitch's butler, who came in to announce that the place in the cemetery fixed on by Praskovya Fyodorovna would cost two hundred roubles. She left off weeping, and with the air of a victim glancing at Pyotr Ivanovitch, said in French that it was very terrible for her. Pyotr Ivanovitch made a silent gesture signifying his unhesitating conviction that it must indeed be so.

"Please, smoke," she said in a magnanimous, and at the same time, crushed voice, and she began discussing with Sokolov the question of the price of the site for the grave.

Pyotr Ivanovitch, lighting a cigarette, listened to her very circumstantial inquiries as to the various prices of sites and her decision as to the one to be selected. Having settled on the site for the grave, she made arrangements also about the choristers. Sokolov went away.

"I see to everything myself," she said to Pyotr Ivanovitch, moving on one side the albums that lay on the table; and noticing that the table was in danger from the cigarette-ash, she promptly passed an ashtray to Pyotr Ivanovitch, and said: "I consider it affectation to pretend that my grief prevents me from looking after practical matters. On the contrary, if anything could—not console me … but distract me, it is seeing after everything for him." She took out her handkerchief again, as though preparing to weep again; and suddenly, as though struggling with herself, she shook herself, and began speaking calmly: "But I've business to talk about with you."

Pyotr Ivanovitch bowed, carefully keeping in check the springs of

the ottoman, which had at once begun quivering under him.

"The last few days his sufferings were awful."

"Did he suffer very much?" asked Pyotr Ivanovitch.

"Oh, awfully! For the last moments, hours indeed, he never left off screaming. For three days and nights in succession he screamed incessantly. It was insufferable. I can't understand how I bore it; one could hear it through three closed doors. Ah, what I suffered!"

"And was he really conscious?" asked Pyotr Ivanovitch.

"Yes," she whispered, "up to the last minute. He said goodbye to us a quarter of an hour before his death, and asked Volodya to be taken away too."

The thought of the sufferings of a man he had known so intimately, at first as a lighthearted boy, a schoolboy, then grown up as a partner at whist, in spite of the unpleasant consciousness of his own and this woman's hypocrisy, suddenly horrified Pyotr Ivanovitch. He saw again that forehead, the nose that seemed squeezing the lip, and he felt frightened for himself. "Three days and nights of awful suffering and death. Why, that may at once, any minute, come upon me too," he thought, and he felt for an instant terrified. But immediately, he could not himself have said how, there came to his support the customary reflection that this had happened to Ivan Ilyitch and not to him, and that to him this must not and could not happen; that in thinking thus he was giving way to depression, which was not the right thing to do, as was evident from Shvarts's expression of face. And making these reflections, Pyotr Ivanovitch felt reassured, and began with interest inquiring details about Ivan Ilyitch's end, as though death were a mischance peculiar to Ivan Ilyitch, but not at all incidental to himself.

After various observations about the details of the truly awful physical sufferings endured by Ivan Ilyitch (these details Pyotr Ivanovitch learned only through the effect Ivan Ilyitch's agonies had had on the nerves of Praskovya Fyodorovna), the widow apparently thought it time to get to business.

"Ah, Pyotr Ivanovitch, how hard it is, how awfully, awfully hard!" and she began to cry again.

Pyotr Ivanovitch sighed, and waited for her to blow her nose. When she had done so, he said, "Indeed it is," and again she began to talk, and brought out what was evidently the business she wished to discuss with him; that business consisted in the inquiry as to how on the occasion of her husband's death she was to obtain a grant from the government. She made a show of asking Pyotr Ivanovitch's advice about a pension. But he perceived that she knew already to the min-

utest details, what he did not know himself indeed, everything that could be got out of the government on the ground of this death; but that what she wanted to find out was, whether there were not any means of obtaining a little more? Pyotr Ivanovitch tried to imagine such means; but after pondering a little, and out of politeness abusing the government for its stinginess, he said that he believed that it was impossible to obtain more. Then she sighed and began unmistakably looking about for an excuse for getting rid of her visitor. He perceived this, put out his cigarette, got up, pressed her hand, and went out into the passage.

In the dining-room, where was the bric-a-brac clock that Ivan Ilyitch had been so delighted at buying, Pyotr Ivanovitch met the priest and several people he knew who had come to the service for the dead, and saw too Ivan Ilyitch's daughter, a handsome young lady. She was all in black. Her very slender figure looked even slenderer than usual. She had a gloomy, determined, almost wrathful expression. She bowed to Pyotr Ivanovitch as though he were to blame in some way. Behind the daughter, with the same offended air on his face, stood a rich young man, whom Pyotr Ivanovitch knew too, an examining magistrate, the young lady's fiancé, as he had heard. He bowed dejectedly to him, and would have gone on into the dead man's room, when from the staircase there appeared the figure of the son, the high school boy, extraordinarily like Ivan Ilyitch. He was the little Ivan Ilyitch over again as Pyotr Ivanovitch remembered him at school. His eyes were red with crying, and had that look often seen in unclean boys of thirteen or fourteen. The boy, seeing Pyotr Ivanovitch, scowled morosely and bashfully. Pyotr Ivanovitch nodded to him and went into the dead man's room. The service for the dead began—candles, groans, incense, tears, sobs. Pyotr Ivanovitch stood frowning, staring at his feet in front of him. He did not once glance at the dead man, and right through to the end did not once give way to depressing influences, and was one of the first to walk out. In the hall there was no one. Gerasim, the young peasant, darted out of the dead man's room, tossed over with his strong hand all the fur cloaks to find Pyotr Ivanovitch's, and gave it him.

"Well, Gerasim, my boy?" said Pyotr Ivanovitch, so as to say something. "A sad business, isn't it?"

"It's God's will. We shall come to the same," said Gerasim, showing his white, even, peasant teeth in a smile, and, like a man in a rush of extra work, he briskly opened the door, called up the coachman, saw Pyotr Ivanovitch into the carriage, and darted back to the steps as though bethinking himself of what he had to do next.

Pyotr Ivanovitch had a special pleasure in the fresh air after the smell of incense, of the corpse, and of carbolic acid.

"Where to?" asked the coachman.

"It's not too late. I'll still go round to Fyodor Vassilievitch's."

And Pyotr Ivanovitch drove there. And he did, in fact, find them just finishing the first rubber, so that he came just at the right time to take a hand.

II

The previous history of Ivan Ilyitch was the simplest, the most ordinary, and the most awful.

Ivan Ilyitch died at the age of forty-five, a member of the Judicial Council. He was the son of an official, whose career in Petersburg through various ministries and departments had been such as leads people into that position in which, though it is distinctly obvious that they are unfit to perform any kind of real duty, they yet cannot, owing to their long past service and their official rank, be dismissed; and they therefore receive a specially created fictitious post, and by no means fictitious thousands—from six to ten—on which they go on living till extreme old age. Such was the privy councillor, the superfluous member of various superfluous institutions, Ilya Efimovitch Golovin.

He had three sons. Ivan Ilyitch was the second son. The eldest son's career was exactly like his father's, only in a different department, and he was by now close upon that stage in the service in which the same sinecure would be reached. The third son was the unsuccessful one. He had in various positions always made a mess of things, and was now employed in the railway department. And his father and his brothers, and still more their wives, did not merely dislike meeting him, but avoided, except in extreme necessity, recollecting his existence. His sister had married Baron Greff, a Petersburg official of the same stamp as his father-in-law. Ivan Ilyitch was *le phénix de la famille*, as people said. He was not so frigid and precise as the eldest son, nor so wild as the youngest. He was the happy mean between them—a shrewd, lively, pleasant, and well-bred man. He had been educated with his younger brother at the school of jurisprudence. The younger brother had not finished the school course, but was expelled when in the fifth class. Ivan Ilyitch completed the course successfully. At school he was just the same as he was later on all his life—an intelligent fellow, highly good-humoured and sociable, but strict in doing what he considered

to be his duty. His duty he considered whatever was so considered by those persons who were set in authority over him. He was not a toady as a boy, nor later on as a grown-up person; but from his earliest years he was attracted, as a fly to the light, to persons of good standing in the world, assimilated their manners and their views of life, and established friendly relations with them. All the enthusiasms of childhood and youth passed, leaving no great traces in him; he gave way to sensuality and to vanity, and latterly when in the higher classes at school to liberalism, but always keeping within certain limits which were unfailingly marked out for him by his instincts.

At school he had committed actions which had struck him beforehand as great vileness, and gave him a feeling of loathing for himself at the very time he was committing them. But later on, perceiving that such actions were committed also by men of good position, and were not regarded by them as base, he was able, not to regard them as good, but to forget about them completely, and was never mortified by recollections of them.

Leaving the school of jurisprudence in the tenth class, and receiving from his father a sum of money for his outfit, Ivan Ilyitch ordered his clothes at Sharmer's, hung on his watch-chain a medallion inscribed "respice finem," said goodbye to the prince who was the principal of his school, had a farewell dinner with his comrades at Donon's, and with all his new fashionable belongings—travelling trunk, linen, suits of clothes, shaving and toilet appurtenances, and travelling rug, all ordered and purchased at the very best shops—set off to take the post of secretary on special commissions for the governor of a province, a post which had been obtained for him by his father.

In the province Ivan Ilyitch without loss of time made himself a position as easy and agreeable as his position had been in the school of jurisprudence. He did his work, made his career, and at the same time led a life of well-bred social gaiety. Occasionally he visited various districts on official duty, behaved with dignity both with his superiors and his inferiors; and with exactitude and an incorruptible honesty of which he could not help feeling proud, performed the duties with which he was entrusted, principally having to do with the dissenters. When engaged in official work he was, in spite of his youth and taste for frivolous amusements, exceedingly reserved, official, and even severe. But in social life he was often amusing and witty, and always good-natured, well bred, and *bon enfant*, as was said of him by his chief and his chief's wife, with whom he was like one of the family.

In the province there was, too, a connection with one of the ladies

who obtruded their charms on the stylish young lawyer. There was a dressmaker, too, and there were drinking bouts with smart officers visiting the neighbourhood, and visits to a certain outlying street after supper; there was a rather cringing obsequiousness in his behaviour, too, with his chief, and even his chief's wife. But all this was accompanied with such a tone of the highest breeding, that it could not be called by harsh names; it all came under the rubric of the French saying, *Il faut que la jeunesse se passe.* Everything was done with clean hands, in clean shirts, with French phrases, and, what was of most importance, in the highest society, and consequently with the approval of people of rank.

Such was Ivan Ilyitch's career for five years, and then came a change in his official life. New methods of judicial procedure were established; new men were wanted to carry them out. And Ivan Ilyitch became such a new man. Ivan Ilyitch was offered the post of examining magistrate, and he accepted it in spite of the fact that this post was in another province, and he would have to break off all the ties he had formed and form new ones. Ivan Ilyitch's friends met together to see him off, had their photographs taken in a group, presented him with a silver cigarette-case, and he set off to his new post.

As an examining magistrate, Ivan Ilyitch was as comme il faut, as well bred, as adroit in keeping official duties apart from private life, and as successful in gaining universal respect, as he had been as secretary of private commissions. The duties of his new office were in themselves of far greater interest and attractiveness for Ivan Ilyitch. In his former post it had been pleasant to pass in his smart uniform from Sharmer's through the crowd of petitioners and officials waiting timorously and envying him, and to march with his easy swagger straight into the governor's private room, there to sit down with him to tea and cigarettes. But the persons directly subject to his authority were few. The only such persons were the district police superintendents and the dissenters, when he was serving on special commissions. And he liked treating such persons affably, almost like comrades; liked to make them feel that he, able to annihilate them, was behaving in this simple, friendly way with them. But such people were then few in number. Now as an examining magistrate Ivan Ilyitch felt that everyone—everyone without exception—the most dignified, the most self-satisfied people, all were in his hands, and that he had but to write certain words on a sheet of paper with a printed heading, and this dignified self-satisfied person would be brought before him in the capacity of a defendant or a witness; and if he did not care to make him sit

down, he would have to stand up before him and answer his questions. Ivan Ilyitch never abused this authority of his; on the contrary, he tried to soften the expression of it. But the consciousness of this power and the possibility of softening its effect constituted for him the chief interest and attractiveness of his new position. In the work itself, in the preliminary inquiries, that is, Ivan Ilyitch very rapidly acquired the art of setting aside every consideration irrelevant to the official aspect of the case, and of reducing every case, however complex, to that form in which it could in a purely external fashion be put on paper, completely excluding his personal view of the matter, and what was of paramount importance, observing all the necessary formalities. All this work was new. And he was one of the first men who put into practical working the reforms in judicial procedure enacted in 1864.

On settling in a new town in his position as examining magistrate, Ivan Ilyitch made new acquaintances, formed new ties, took up a new line, and adopted a rather different attitude. He took up an attitude of somewhat dignified aloofness towards the provincial authorities, while he picked out the best circle among the legal gentlemen and wealthy gentry living in the town, and adopted a tone of slight dissatisfaction with the government, moderate liberalism, and lofty civic virtue. With this, while making no change in the elegance of his getup, Ivan Ilyitch in his new office gave up shaving, and left his beard free to grow as it liked. Ivan Ilyitch's existence in the new town proved to be very agreeable; the society which took the line of opposition to the governor was friendly and good; his income was larger, and he found a source of increased enjoyment in whist, at which he began to play at this time; and having a faculty for playing cards good-humouredly, and being rapid and exact in his calculations, he was as a rule on the winning side.

After living two years in the new town, Ivan Ilyitch met his future wife. Praskovya Fyodorovna Mihel was the most attractive, clever, and brilliant girl in the set in which Ivan Ilyitch moved. Among other amusements and recreations after his labours as a magistrate, Ivan Ilyitch started a light, playful flirtation with Praskovya Fyodorovna.

Ivan Ilyitch when he was an assistant secretary had danced as a rule; as an examining magistrate he danced only as an exception. He danced now as it were under protest, as though to show "that though I am serving on the new reformed legal code, and am of the fifth class in official rank, still if it comes to a question of dancing, in that line too I can do better than others." In this spirit he danced now and then towards the end of the evening with Praskovya Fyodorovna,

and it was principally during these dances that he won the heart of Praskovya Fyodorovna. She fell in love with him. Ivan Ilyitch had no clearly defined intention of marrying; but when the girl fell in love with him, he put the question to himself: "After all, why not get married?" he said to himself.

The young lady, Praskovya Fyodorovna, was of good family, nice-looking. There was a little bit of property. Ivan Ilyitch might have reckoned on a more brilliant match, but this was a good match. Ivan Ilyitch had his salary; she, he hoped, would have as much of her own. It was a good family; she was a sweet, pretty, and perfectly comme il faut young woman. To say that Ivan Ilyitch got married because he fell in love with his wife and found in her sympathy with his views of life, would be as untrue as to say that he got married because the people of his world approved of the match. Ivan Ilyitch was influenced by both considerations; he was doing what was agreeable to himself in securing such a wife, and at the same time doing what persons of higher standing looked upon as the correct thing.

And Ivan Ilyitch got married.

The process itself of getting married and the early period of married life, with the conjugal caresses, the new furniture, the new crockery, the new house linen, all up to the time of his wife's pregnancy, went off very well; so that Ivan Ilyitch had already begun to think that so far from marriage breaking up that kind of frivolous, agreeable, lighthearted life, always decorous and always approved by society, which he regarded as the normal life, it would even increase its agreeableness. But at that point, in the early months of his wife's pregnancy, there came in a new element, unexpected, unpleasant, tiresome and unseemly, which could never have been anticipated, and from which there was no escape.

His wife, without any kind of reason, it seemed to Ivan Ilyitch, *de gaité de cœur* as he expressed it, began to disturb the agreeableness and decorum of their life. She began without any sort of justification to be jealous, exacting in her demands on his attention, squabbled over everything, and treated him to the coarsest and most unpleasant scenes.

At first Ivan Ilyitch hoped to escape from the unpleasantness of this position by taking up the same frivolous and well-bred line that had served him well on other occasions of difficulty. He endeavoured to ignore his wife's ill-humour, went on living lightheartedly and agreeably as before, invited friends to play cards, tried to get away himself to the club or to his friends. But his wife began on one occasion with such energy, abusing him in such coarse language, and so obstinately

persisted in her abuse of him every time he failed in carrying out her demands, obviously having made up her mind firmly to persist till he gave way, that is, stayed at home and was as dull as she was, that Ivan Ilyitch took alarm. He perceived that matrimony, at least with his wife, was not invariably conducive to the pleasures and proprieties of life; but, on the contrary, often destructive of them, and that it was therefore essential to erect some barrier to protect himself from these disturbances. And Ivan Ilyitch began to look about for such means of protecting himself. His official duties were the only thing that impressed Praskovya Fyodorovna, and Ivan Ilyitch began to use his official position, and the duties arising from it in his struggle with his wife to fence off his own independent world apart.

With the birth of the baby, the attempts at nursing it, and the various unsuccessful experiments with foods, with the illnesses, real and imaginary, of the infant and its mother, in which Ivan Ilyitch was expected to sympathise, though he never had the slightest idea about them, the need for him to fence off a world apart for himself outside his family life became still more imperative. As his wife grew more irritable and exacting, so did Ivan Ilyitch more and more transfer the centre of gravity of his life to his official work. He became fonder and fonder of official life, and more ambitious than he had been.

Very quickly, not more than a year after his wedding, Ivan Ilyitch had become aware that conjugal life, though providing certain comforts, was in reality a very intricate and difficult business towards which one must, if one is to do one's duty, that is, lead the decorous life approved by society, work out for oneself a definite line, just as in the government service.

And such a line Ivan Ilyitch did work out for himself in his married life. He expected from his home life only those comforts—of dinner at home, of housekeeper and bed which it could give him, and, above all, that perfect propriety in external observances required by public opinion. For the rest, he looked for good-humoured pleasantness, and if he found it he was very thankful. If he met with antagonism and querulousness, he promptly retreated into the separate world he had shut off for himself in his official life, and there he found solace.

Ivan Ilyitch was prized as a good official, and three years later he was made assistant public prosecutor. The new duties of this position, their dignity, the possibility of bringing anyone to trial and putting anyone in prison, the publicity of the speeches and the success Ivan Ilyitch had in that part of his work—all this made his official work still more attractive to him.

Children were born to him. His wife became steadily more querulous and ill-tempered, but the line Ivan Ilyitch had taken up for himself in home life put him almost out of reach of her grumbling.

After seven years of service in the same town, Ivan Ilyitch was transferred to another province with the post of public prosecutor. They moved, money was short, and his wife did not like the place they had moved to. The salary was indeed a little higher than before, but their expenses were larger. Besides, a couple of children died, and home life consequently became even less agreeable for Ivan Ilyitch.

For every mischance that occurred in their new place of residence, Praskovya Fyodorovna blamed her husband. The greater number of subjects of conversation between husband and wife, especially the education of the children, led to questions which were associated with previous quarrels, and quarrels were ready to break out at every instant. There remained only those rare periods of being in love which did indeed come upon them, but never lasted long. These were the islands at which they put in for a time, but they soon set off again upon the ocean of concealed hostility, that was made manifest in their aloofness from one another. This aloofness might have distressed Ivan Ilyitch if he had believed that this ought not to be so, but by now he regarded this position as perfectly normal, and it was indeed the goal towards which he worked in his home life. His aim was to make himself more and more free from the unpleasant aspects of domestic life and to render them harmless and decorous. And he attained this aim by spending less and less time with his family; and when he was forced to be at home, he endeavoured to secure his tranquillity by the presence of outsiders. The great thing for Ivan Ilyitch was having his office. In the official world all the interest of life was concentrated for him. And this interest absorbed him. The sense of his own power, the consciousness of being able to ruin anyone he wanted to ruin, even the external dignity of his office, when he made his entry into the court or met subordinate officials, his success in the eyes of his superiors and his subordinates, and, above all, his masterly handling of cases, of which he was conscious—all this delighted him and, together with chat with his colleagues, dining out, and whist, filled his life. So that, on the whole, Ivan Ilyitch's life still went on in the way he thought it should go—agreeably and decorously.

So he lived for another seven years. His eldest daughter was already sixteen, another child had died, and there was left only one other, a boy at the high school, a subject of dissension. Ivan Ilyitch wanted to send him to the school of jurisprudence, while Praskovya Fyodorovna

to spite him sent him to the high school. The daughter had been educated at home, and had turned out well; the boy too did fairly well at his lessons.

III

Such was Ivan Ilyitch's life for seventeen years after his marriage. He had been by now a long while prosecutor, and had refused several appointments offered him, looking out for a more desirable post, when there occurred an unexpected incident which utterly destroyed his peace of mind. Ivan Ilyitch had been expecting to be appointed presiding judge in a university town, but a certain Goppe somehow stole a march on him and secured the appointment. Ivan Ilyitch took offence, began upbraiding him, and quarrelled with him and with his own superiors. A coolness was felt towards him, and on the next appointment that was made he was again passed over.

This was in the year 1880. That year was the most painful one in Ivan Ilyitch's life. During that year it became evident on the one hand that his pay was insufficient for his expenses; on the other hand, that he had been forgotten by everyone, and that what seemed to him the most monstrous, the cruelest injustice, appeared to other people as a quite commonplace fact. Even his father felt no obligation to assist him. He felt that everyone had deserted him, and that everyone regarded his position with an income of three thousand five hundred roubles as a quite normal and even fortunate one. He alone, with a sense of the injustice done him, and the everlasting nagging of his wife and the debts he had begun to accumulate, living beyond his means, knew that his position was far from being normal.

The summer of that year, to cut down his expenses, he took a holiday and went with his wife to spend the summer in the country at her brother's.

In the country, with no official duties to occupy him, Ivan Ilyitch was for the first time a prey not to simple boredom, but to intolerable depression; and he made up his mind that things could not go on like that, and that it was absolutely necessary to take some decisive steps.

After a sleepless night spent by Ivan Ilyitch walking up and down the terrace, he determined to go to Petersburg to take active steps and to get transferred to some other department, so as to revenge himself on *them*, the people, that is, who had not known how to appreciate him.

Next day, in spite of all the efforts of his wife and his mother-in-law to dissuade him, he set off to Petersburg.

He went with a single object before him—to obtain a post with an income of five thousand. He was ready now to be satisfied with a post in any department, of any tendency, with any kind of work. He must only have a post—a post with five thousand, in the executive department, the banks, the railways, the Empress Marya's institutions, even in the customs duties—what was essential was five thousand, and essential it was, too, to get out of the department in which they had failed to appreciate his value.

And, behold, this quest of Ivan Ilyitch's was crowned with wonderful, unexpected success. At Kursk there got into the same first-class carriage F. S. Ilyin, an acquaintance, who told him of a telegram just received by the governor of Kursk, announcing a change about to take place in the ministry—Pyotr Ivanovitch was to be superseded by Ivan Semyonovitch.

The proposed change, apart from its significance for Russia, had special significance for Ivan Ilyitch from the fact that by bringing to the front a new person, Pyotr Petrovitch, and obviously, therefore, his friend Zahar Ivanovitch, it was in the highest degree propitious to Ivan Ilyitch's own plans. Zahar Ivanovitch was a friend and schoolfellow of Ivan Ilyitch's.

At Moscow the news was confirmed. On arriving at Petersburg, Ivan Ilyitch looked up Zahar Ivanovitch, and received a positive promise of an appointment in his former department—that of justice.

A week later he telegraphed to his wife: "Zahar Miller's place. At first report I receive appointment."

Thanks to these changes, Ivan Ilyitch unexpectedly obtained, in the same department as before, an appointment which placed him two stages higher than his former colleagues, and gave him an income of five thousand, together with the official allowance of three thousand five hundred for travelling expenses. All his ill-humour with his former enemies and the whole department was forgotten, and Ivan Ilyitch was completely happy.

Ivan Ilyitch went back to the country more lighthearted and good-tempered than he had been for a very long while. Praskovya Fyodorovna was in better spirits, too, and peace was patched up between them. Ivan Ilyitch described what respect everyone had shown him in Petersburg; how all those who had been his enemies had been put to shame, and were cringing now before him; how envious they were of his appointment, and still more of the high favour in which he stood

at Petersburg.

Praskovya Fyodorovna listened to this, and pretended to believe it, and did not contradict him in anything, but confined herself to making plans, for her new arrangements in the town to which they would be moving. And Ivan Ilyitch saw with delight that these plans were his plans; that they were agreed; and that his life after this disturbing hitch in its progress was about to regain its true, normal character of lighthearted agreeableness and propriety.

Ivan Ilyitch had come back to the country for a short stay only. He had to enter upon the duties of his new office on the 10th of September; and besides, he needed some time to settle in a new place, to move all his belongings from the other province, to purchase and order many things in addition; in short, to arrange things as settled in his own mind, and almost exactly as settled in the heart too of Praskovya Fyodorovna.

And now when everything was so successfully arranged, and when he and his wife were agreed in their aim, and were, besides, so little together, they got on with one another as they had not got on together since the early years of their married life. Ivan Ilyitch had thought of taking his family away with him at once; but his sister and his brother-in-law, who had suddenly become extremely cordial and intimate with him and his family, were so pressing in urging them to stay that he set off alone.

Ivan Ilyitch started off; and the lighthearted temper produced by his success, and his good understanding with his wife, one thing backing up another, did not desert him all the time. He found a charming set of apartments, the very thing both husband and wife had dreamed of. Spacious, lofty reception-rooms in the old style, a comfortable, dignified-looking study for him, rooms for his wife and daughter, a schoolroom for his son, everything as though planned on purpose for them. Ivan Ilyitch himself looked after the furnishing of them, chose the wallpapers, bought furniture, by preference antique furniture, which had a peculiar comme-il-faut style to his mind, and it all grew up and grew up, and really attained the ideal he had set before himself. When he had half finished arranging the house, his arrangement surpassed his own expectations. He saw the comme-il-faut character, elegant and free from vulgarity, that the whole would have when it was all ready. As he fell asleep he pictured to himself the reception-room as it would be. Looking at the drawing-room, not yet finished, he could see the hearth, the screen, the étagère, and the little chairs dotted here and there, the plates and dishes on the wall, and the bronzes as they

would be when they were all put in their places. He was delighted with the thought of how he would impress Praskovya and Lizanka, who had taste too in this line. They would never expect anything like it. He was particularly successful in coming across and buying cheap old pieces of furniture, which gave a peculiarly aristocratic air to the whole. In his letters he purposely disparaged everything so as to surprise them. All this so absorbed him that the duties of his new office, though he was so fond of his official work, interested him less than he had expected. During sittings of the court he had moments of inattention; he pondered the question which sort of cornices to have on the window-blinds, straight or fluted. He was so interested in this business that he often set to work with his own hands, moved a piece of furniture, or hung up curtains himself. One day he went up a ladder to show a workman, who did not understand, how he wanted some hangings draped, made a false step and slipped; but, like a strong and nimble person, he clung on, and only knocked his side against the corner of a frame. The bruised place ached, but it soon passed off. Ivan Ilyitch felt all this time particularly good-humoured and well. He wrote: "I feel fifteen years younger." He thought his house-furnishing would be finished in September, but it dragged on to the middle of October. But then the effect was charming; not he only said so, but everyone who saw it told him so too.

In reality, it was all just what is commonly seen in the houses of people who are not exactly wealthy but want to look like wealthy people, and so succeed only in being like one another—hangings, dark wood, flowers, rugs and bronzes, everything dark and highly polished, everything that all people of a certain class have so as to be like all people of a certain class. And in his case it was all so like that it made no impression at all; but it all seemed to him somehow special. When he met his family at the railway station and brought them to his newly furnished rooms, all lighted up in readiness, and a footman in a white tie opened the door into an entry decorated with flowers, and then they walked into the drawing-room and the study, uttering cries of delight, he was very happy, conducted them everywhere, eagerly drinking in their praises, and beaming with satisfaction. The same evening, while they talked about various things at tea, Praskovya Fyodorovna inquired about his fall, and he laughed and showed them how he had gone flying, and how he had frightened the upholsterer.

"It's as well I'm something of an athlete. Another man might have been killed, and I got nothing worse than a blow here; when it's touched it hurts, but it's going off already; nothing but a bruise."

And they began to live in their new abode, which, as is always the case, when they had got thoroughly settled in they found to be short of just one room, and with their new income, which, as always, was only a little—some five hundred roubles—too little, and everything went very well. Things went particularly well at first, before everything was quite finally arranged, and there was still something to do to the place—something to buy, something to order, something to move, something to make to fit. Though there were indeed several disputes between husband and wife, both were so well satisfied, and there was so much to do, that it all went off without serious quarrels. When there was nothing left to arrange, it became a little dull, and something seemed to be lacking, but by then they were making acquaintances and forming habits, and life was filled up again.

Ivan Ilyitch, after spending the morning in the court, returned home to dinner, and at first he was generally in a good humour, although this was apt to be upset a little, and precisely on account of the new abode. Every spot on the tablecloth, on the hangings, the string of a window blind broken, irritated him. He had devoted so much trouble to the arrangement of the rooms that any disturbance of their order distressed him. But, on the whole, the life of Ivan Ilyitch ran its course as, according to his conviction, life ought to do—easily, agreeably, and decorously. He got up at nine, drank his coffee, read the newspaper, then put on his official uniform, and went to the court. There the routine of the daily work was ready mapped out for him, and he stepped into it at once. People with petitions, inquiries in the office, the office itself, the sittings—public and preliminary. In all this the great thing necessary was to exclude everything with the sap of life in it, which always disturbs the regular course of official business, not to admit any sort of relations with people except the official relations; the motive of all intercourse had to be simply the official motive, and the intercourse itself to be only official. A man would come, for instance, anxious for certain information. Ivan Ilyitch, not being the functionary on duty, would have nothing whatever to do with such a man. But if this man's relation to him as a member of the court is such as can be formulated on official stamped paper—within the limits of such a relation Ivan Ilyitch would do everything, positively everything he could, and in doing so would observe the semblance of human friendly relations, that is, the courtesies of social life. But where the official relation ended, there everything else stopped too. This art of keeping the official aspect of things apart from his real life, Ivan Ilyitch possessed in the highest degree; and through long practice and natural aptitude, he had brought

it to such a pitch of perfection that he even permitted himself at times, like a skilled specialist as it were in jest, to let the human and official relations mingle. He allowed himself this liberty just because he felt he had the power at any moment if he wished it to take up the purely official line again and to drop the human relation. This thing was not simply easy, agreeable, and decorous; in Ivan Ilyitch's hands it attained a positively artistic character. In the intervals of business he smoked, drank tea, chatted a little about politics, a little about public affairs, a little about cards, but most of all about appointments in the service. And tired, but feeling like some artist who has skilfully played his part in the performance, one of the first violins in the orchestra, he returned home. At home his daughter and her mother had been paying calls somewhere, or else someone had been calling on them; the son had been at school, had been preparing his lessons with his teachers, and duly learning correctly what was taught at the high school. Everything was as it should be. After dinner, if there were no visitors, Ivan Ilyitch sometimes read some book of which people were talking, and in the evening sat down to work, that is, read official papers, compared them with the laws, sorted depositions, and put them under the laws. This he found neither tiresome nor entertaining. It was tiresome when he might have been playing "screw"; but if there were no "screw" going on, it was anyway better than sitting alone or with his wife. Ivan Ilyitch's pleasures were little dinners, to which he invited ladies and gentlemen of good social position, and such methods of passing the time with them as were usual with such persons, so that his drawing-room might be like all other drawing-rooms.

Once they even gave a party—a dance. And Ivan Ilyitch enjoyed it, and everything was very successful, except that it led to a violent quarrel with his wife over the tarts and sweetmeats. Praskovya Fyodorovna had her own plan; while Ivan Ilyitch insisted on getting everything from an expensive pastrycook, and ordered a great many tarts, and the quarrel was because these tarts were left over and the pastrycook's bill came to forty-five roubles. The quarrel was a violent and unpleasant one, so much so that Praskovya Fyodorovna called him, "Fool, imbecile." And he clutched at his head, and in his anger made some allusion to a divorce. But the party itself was enjoyable. There were all the best people, and Ivan Ilyitch danced with Princess Trufonov, the sister of the one so well known in connection with the charitable association called, "Bear my Burden." His official pleasures lay in the gratification of his pride; his social pleasures lay in the gratification of his vanity. But Ivan Ilyitch's most real pleasure was the

pleasure of playing "screw," the Russian equivalent for "poker." He admitted to himself that after all, after whatever unpleasant incidents there had been in his life, the pleasure which burned like a candle before all others was sitting with good players, and not noisy partners, at "screw"; and, of course, a four-hand game (playing with five was never a success, though one pretends to like it particularly), and with good cards, to play a shrewd, serious game, then supper and a glass of wine. And after "screw," especially after winning some small stakes (winning large sums was unpleasant), Ivan Ilyitch went to bed in a particularly happy frame of mind.

So they lived. They moved in the very best circle, and were visited by people of consequence and young people.

In their views of their circle of acquaintances, the husband, the wife, and the daughter were in complete accord; and without any expressed agreement on the subject, they all acted alike in dropping and shaking off various friends and relations, shabby persons who swooped down upon them in their drawing-room with Japanese plates on the walls, and pressed their civilities on them. Soon these shabby persons ceased fluttering about them, and none but the very best society was seen at the Golovins. Young men began to pay attention to Lizanka; and Petrishtchev, the son of Dmitry Ivanovitch Petrishtchev, and the sole heir of his fortune, an examining magistrate, began to be so attentive to Lizanka, that Ivan Ilyitch had raised the question with his wife whether it would not be as well to arrange a sledge drive for them, or to get up some theatricals. So they lived. And everything went on in this way without change, and everything was very nice.

IV

All were in good health. One could not use the word ill-health in connection with the symptoms Ivan Ilyitch sometimes complained of, namely, a queer taste in his mouth and a sort of uncomfortable feeling on the left side of the stomach.

But it came to pass that this uncomfortable feeling kept increasing, and became not exactly a pain, but a continual sense of weight in his side and irritable temper. This irritable temper continually growing and growing, began at last to mar the agreeable easiness and decorum that had reigned in the Golovin household. Quarrels between the husband and wife became more and more frequent, and soon all the easiness and amenity of life had fallen away, and mere propriety was

maintained with difficulty. Scenes became again more frequent. Again there were only islands in the sea of contention—and but few of these—at which the husband and wife could meet without an outbreak. And Praskovya Fyodorovna said now, not without grounds, that her husband had a trying temper. With her characteristic exaggeration, she said he had always had this awful temper, and she had needed all her sweetness to put up with it for twenty years. It was true that it was he now who began the quarrels. His gusts of temper always broke out just before dinner, and often just as he was beginning to eat, at the soup. He would notice that some piece of the crockery had been chipped, or that the food was not nice, or that his son put his elbow on the table, or his daughter's hair was not arranged as he liked it. And whatever it was, he laid the blame of it on Praskovya Fyodorovna. Praskovya Fyodorovna had at first retorted in the same strain, and said all sorts of horrid things to him; but on two occasions, just at the beginning of dinner, he had flown into such a frenzy that she perceived that it was due to physical derangement, and was brought on by taking food, and she controlled herself; she did not reply, but simply made haste to get dinner over. Praskovya Fyodorovna took great credit to herself for this exercise of self-control. Making up her mind that her husband had a fearful temper, and made her life miserable, she began to feel sorry for herself. And the more she felt for herself, the more she hated her husband. She began to wish he were dead; yet could not wish it, because then there would be no income. And this exasperated her against him even more. She considered herself dreadfully unfortunate, precisely because even his death could not save her, and she felt irritated and concealed it, and this hidden irritation on her side increased his irritability.

After one violent scene, in which Ivan Ilyitch had been particularly unjust, and after which he had said in explanation that he certainly was irritable, but that it was due to illness, she said that if he were ill he ought to take steps, and insisted on his going to see a celebrated doctor.

He went. Everything was as he had expected; everything was as it always is. The waiting and the assumption of dignity, that professional dignity he knew so well, exactly as he assumed it himself in court, and the sounding and listening and questions that called for answers that were foregone conclusions and obviously superfluous, and the significant air that seemed to insinuate—you only leave it all to us, and we will arrange everything, for us it is certain and incontestable how to arrange everything, everything in one way for every man of every sort.

It was all exactly as in his court of justice. Exactly the same air as he put on in dealing with a man brought up for judgment, the doctor put on for him.

The doctor said: This and that proves that you have such-and-such a thing wrong inside you; but if that is not confirmed by analysis of this and that, then we must assume this and that. If we assume this and that, then—and so on. To Ivan Ilyitch there was only one question of consequence, *Was his condition dangerous or not?* But the doctor ignored that irrelevant inquiry. From the doctor's point of view this was a side issue, not the subject under consideration; the only real question was the balance of probabilities between a loose kidney, chronic catarrh, and appendicitis. It was not a question of the life of Ivan Ilyitch, but the question between the loose kidney and the intestinal appendix. And this question, as it seemed to Ivan Ilyitch, the doctor solved in a brilliant manner in favour of the appendix, with the reservation that analysis of the water might give a fresh clue, and that then the aspect of the case would be altered. All this was point for point identical with what Ivan Ilyitch had himself done in brilliant fashion a thousand times over in dealing with some man on his trial. Just as brilliantly the doctor made his summing-up, and triumphantly, gaily even, glanced over his spectacles at the prisoner in the dock. From the doctor's summing-up Ivan Ilyitch deduced the conclusion—that things looked bad, and that he, the doctor, and most likely everyone else, did not care, but that things looked bad for him. And this conclusion impressed Ivan Ilyitch morbidly, arousing in him a great feeling of pity for himself, of great anger against this doctor who could be unconcerned about a matter of such importance.

But he said nothing of that. He got up, and, laying the fee on the table, he said, with a sigh, "We sick people probably often ask inconvenient questions. Tell me, is this generally a dangerous illness or not?"

The doctor glanced severely at him with one eye through his spectacles, as though to say: "Prisoner at the bar, if you will not keep within the limits of the questions allowed you, I shall be compelled to take measures for your removal from the precincts of the court." "I have told you what I thought necessary and suitable already," said the doctor; "the analysis will show anything further." And the doctor bowed him out.

Ivan Ilyitch went out slowly and dejectedly, got into his sledge, and drove home. All the way home he was incessantly going over all the doctor had said, trying to translate all these complicated, obscure,

scientific phrases into simple language, and to read in them an answer to the question. It's bad—is it very bad, or nothing much as yet? And it seemed to him that the upshot of all the doctor had said was that it was very bad. Everything seemed dismal to Ivan Ilyitch in the streets. The sledge-drivers were dismal, the houses were dismal, the people passing, and the shops were dismal. This ache, this dull gnawing ache, that never ceased for a second, seemed, when connected with the doctor's obscure utterances, to have gained a new, more serious significance. With a new sense of misery Ivan Ilyitch kept watch on it now.

He reached home and began to tell his wife about it. His wife listened; but in the middle of his account his daughter came in with her hat on, ready to go out with her mother. Reluctantly she half sat down to listen to these tedious details, but she could not stand it for long, and her mother did not hear his story to the end.

"Well, I'm very glad," said his wife; "now you must be sure and take the medicine regularly. Give me the prescription; I'll send Gerasim to the chemist's!" And she went to get ready to go out.

He had not taken breath while she was in the room, and he heaved a deep sigh when she was gone.

"Well," he said, "maybe it really is nothing as yet."

He began to take the medicine, to carry out the doctor's directions, which were changed after the analysis of the water. But it was just at this point that some confusion arose, either in the analysis or in what ought to have followed from it. The doctor himself, of course, could not be blamed for it, but it turned out that things had not gone as the doctor had told him. Either he had forgotten or told a lie, or was hiding something from him.

But Ivan Ilyitch still went on just as exactly carrying out the doctor's direction, and in doing so he found comfort at first.

From the time of his visit to the doctor Ivan Ilyitch's principal occupation became the exact observance of the doctor's prescriptions as regards hygiene and medicine and the careful observation of his ailment in all the functions of his organism. Ivan Ilyitch's principal interest came to be people's ailments and people's health. When anything was said in his presence about sick people, about deaths and recoveries, especially in the case of an illness resembling his own, he listened, trying to conceal his excitement, asked questions, and applied what he heard to his own trouble.

The ache did not grow less; but Ivan Ilyitch made great efforts to force himself to believe that he was better. And he succeeded in

deceiving himself so long as nothing happened to disturb him. But as soon as he had a mischance, some unpleasant words with his wife, a failure in his official work, an unlucky hand at "screw," he was at once acutely sensible of his illness. In former days he had borne with such mishaps, hoping soon to retrieve the mistake, to make a struggle, to reach success later, to have a lucky hand. But now he was cast down by every mischance and reduced to despair. He would say to himself: "Here I'm only just beginning to get better, and the medicine has begun to take effect, and now this mischance or disappointment." And he was furious against the mischance or the people who were causing him the disappointment and killing him, and he felt that this fury was killing him, but could not check it. One would have thought that it should have been clear to him that this exasperation against circumstances and people was aggravating his disease, and that therefore he ought not to pay attention to the unpleasant incidents. But his reasoning took quite the opposite direction. He said that he needed peace, and was on the watch for everything that disturbed his peace, and at the slightest disturbance of it he flew into a rage. What made his position worse was that he read medical books and consulted doctors. He got worse so gradually that he might have deceived himself, comparing one day with another, the difference was so slight. But when he consulted the doctors, then it seemed to him that he was getting worse, and very rapidly so indeed. And in spite of this, he was continually consulting the doctors.

That month he called on another celebrated doctor. The second celebrity said almost the same as the first, but put his questions differently; and the interview with this celebrity only redoubled the doubts and terrors of Ivan Ilyitch. A friend of a friend of his, a very good doctor, diagnosed the disease quite differently; and in spite of the fact that he guaranteed recovery, by his questions and his suppositions he confused Ivan Ilyitch even more and strengthened his suspicions. A homoeopath gave yet another diagnosis of the complaint, and prescribed medicine, which Ivan Ilyitch took secretly for a week; but after a week of the homoeopathic medicine he felt no relief, and losing faith both in the other doctor's treatment and in this, he fell into even deeper depression. One day a lady of his acquaintance talked to him of the healing wrought by the holy pictures. Ivan Ilyitch caught himself listening attentively and believing in the reality of the facts alleged. This incident alarmed him. "Can I have degenerated to such a point of intellectual feebleness?" he said to himself. "Nonsense! it's all rubbish. I must not give way to nervous fears, but fixing on one doctor, adhere

strictly to his treatment. That's what I will do. Now it's settled. I won't think about it, but till next summer I will stick to the treatment, and then I shall see. Now I'll put a stop to this wavering!" It was easy to say this, but impossible to carry it out. The pain in his side was always dragging at him, seeming to grow more acute and ever more incessant; it seemed to him that the taste in his mouth was queerer, and there was a loathsome smell even from his breath, and his appetite and strength kept dwindling. There was no deceiving himself; something terrible, new, and so important that nothing more important had ever been in Ivan Ilyitch's life, was taking place in him, and he alone knew of it. All about him did not or would not understand, and believed that everything in the world was going on as before. This was what tortured Ivan Ilyitch more than anything. Those of his own household, most of all his wife and daughter, who were absorbed in a perfect whirl of visits, did not, he saw, comprehend it at all, and were annoyed that he was so depressed and exacting, as though he were to blame for it. Though they tried indeed to disguise it, he saw he was a nuisance to them; but that his wife had taken up a definite line of her own in regard to his illness, and stuck to it regardless of what he might say and do. This line was expressed thus: "You know," she would say to acquaintances, "Ivan Ilyitch cannot, like all other simple-hearted folks, keep to the treatment prescribed him. One day he'll take his drops and eat what he's ordered, and go to bed in good time; the next day, if I don't see to it, he'll suddenly forget to take his medicine, eat sturgeon (which is forbidden by the doctors), yes, and sit up at 'screw' till past midnight."

"Why, when did I do that?" Ivan Ilyitch asked in vexation one day at Pyotr Ivanovitch's.

"Why, yesterday, with Shebek."

"It makes no difference. I couldn't sleep for pain."

"Well, it doesn't matter what you do it for, only you'll never get well like that, and you make us wretched."

Praskovya Fyodorovna's external attitude to her husband's illness, openly expressed to others and to himself, was that Ivan Ilyitch was to blame in the matter of his illness, and that the whole illness was another injury he was doing to his wife. Ivan Ilyitch felt that the expression of this dropped from her unconsciously, but that made it no easier for him.

In his official life, too, Ivan Ilyitch noticed, or fancied he noticed, a strange attitude to him. At one time it seemed to him that people were looking inquisitively at him, as a man who would shortly have to vacate

his position; at another time his friends would suddenly begin chaffing him in a friendly way over his nervous fears, as though that awful and horrible, unheard-of thing that was going on within him, incessantly gnawing at him, and irresistibly dragging him away somewhere, were the most agreeable subject for joking. Shvarts especially, with his jocoseness, his liveliness, and his comme-il-faut tone, exasperated Ivan Ilyitch by reminding him of himself ten years ago.

Friends came sometimes to play cards. They sat down to the card-table; they shuffled and dealt the new cards. Diamonds were led and followed by diamonds, the seven. His partner said, "Can't trump," and played the two of diamonds. What then? Why, delightful, capital, it should have been—he had a trump hand. And suddenly Ivan Ilyitch feels that gnawing ache, that taste in his mouth, and it strikes him as something grotesque that with that he could be glad of a trump hand.

He looks at Mihail Mihailovitch, his partner, how he taps on the table with his red hand, and affably and indulgently abstains from snatching up the trick, and pushes the cards towards Ivan Ilyitch so as to give him the pleasure of taking them up, without any trouble, without even stretching out his hand. "What, does he suppose that I'm so weak that I can't stretch out my hand?" thinks Ivan Ilyitch, and he forgets the trumps, and trumps his partner's cards, and plays his trump hand without making three tricks; and what's the most awful thing of all is that he sees how upset Mihail Mihailovitch is about it, while he doesn't care a bit, and it's awful for him to think why he doesn't care.

They all see that he's in pain, and say to him, "We can stop if you're tired. You go and lie down." Lie down? No, he's not in the least tired; they will play the rubber. All are gloomy and silent. Ivan Ilyitch feels that it is he who has brought this gloom upon them, and he cannot disperse it. They have supper, and the party breaks up, and Ivan Ilyitch is left alone with the consciousness that his life is poisoned for him and poisons the life of others, and that this poison is not losing its force, but is continually penetrating more and more deeply into his whole existence.

And with the consciousness of this, and with the physical pain in addition, and the terror in addition to that, he must lie in his bed, often not able to sleep for pain the greater part of the night; and in the morning he must get up again, dress, go to the law-court, speak, write, or, if he does not go out, stay at home for all the four-and-twenty hours of the day and night, of which each one is a torture. And he had to live thus on the edge of the precipice alone, without one man who

would understand and feel for him.

V

In this way one month, then a second, passed by. Just before the New Year his brother-in-law arrived in the town on a visit to them. Ivan Ilyitch was at the court when he arrived. Praskovya Fyodorovna had gone out shopping. Coming home and going into his study, he found there his brother-in-law, a healthy, florid man, engaged in unpacking his trunk. He raised his head, hearing Ivan Ilyitch's step, and for a second stared at him without a word. That stare told Ivan Ilyitch everything. His brother-in-law opened his mouth to utter an "Oh!" of surprise, but checked himself. That confirmed it all.

"What! have I changed?"

"Yes, there is a change."

And all Ivan Ilyitch's efforts to draw him into talking of his appearance his brother-in-law met with obstinate silence. Praskovya Fyodorovna came in; the brother-in-law went to see her. Ivan Ilyitch locked his door, and began gazing at himself in the looking-glass, first full face, then in profile. He took up his photograph, taken with his wife, and compared the portrait with what he saw in the looking-glass. The change was immense. Then he bared his arm to the elbow, looked at it, pulled the sleeve down again, sat down on an ottoman, and felt blacker than night.

"I mustn't, I mustn't," he said to himself, jumped up, went to the table, opened some official paper, tried to read it, but could not. He opened the door, went into the drawing-room. The door into the drawing-room was closed. He went up to it on tiptoe and listened.

"No, you're exaggerating," Praskovya Fyodorovna was saying.

"Exaggerating? You can't see it. Why, he's a dead man. Look at his eyes—there's no light in them. But what's wrong with him?"

"No one can tell. Nikolaev" (that was another doctor) "said something, but I don't know. Leshtchetitsky" (this was the celebrated doctor) "said the opposite."

Ivan Ilyitch walked away, went to his own room, lay down, and fell to musing. "A kidney—a loose kidney." He remembered all the doctors had told him, how it had been detached, and how it was loose; and by an effort of imagination he tried to catch that kidney and to stop it, to strengthen it. So little was needed, he fancied. "No, I'll go again to Pyotr Ivanovitch" (this was the friend who had a friend a doctor). He

rang, ordered the horse to be put in, and got ready to go out.

"Where are you off to, Jean?" asked his wife with a peculiarly melancholy and exceptionally kind expression.

This exceptionally kind expression exasperated him. He looked darkly at her.

"I want to see Pyotr Ivanovitch."

He went to the friend who had a friend a doctor. And with him to the doctor's. He found him in, and had a long conversation with him.

Reviewing the anatomical and physiological details of what, according to the doctor's view, was taking place within him, he understood it all. It was just one thing—a little thing wrong with the intestinal appendix. It might all come right. Only strengthen one sluggish organ, and decrease the undue activity of another, and absorption would take place, and all would be set right. He was a little late for dinner. He ate his dinner, talked cheerfully, but it was a long while before he could go to his own room to work. At last he went to his study, and at once sat down to work. He read his legal documents and did his work, but the consciousness never left him of having a matter of importance very near to his heart which he had put off, but would look into later. When he had finished his work, he remembered that the matter near his heart was thinking about the intestinal appendix. But he did not give himself up to it; he went into the drawing-room to tea. There were visitors; and there was talking, playing on the piano, and singing; there was the young examining magistrate, the desirable match for the daughter. Ivan Ilyitch spent the evening, as Praskovya Fyodorovna observed, in better spirits than any of them; but he never forgot for an instant that he had the important matter of the intestinal appendix put off for consideration later. At eleven o'clock he said good night and went to his own room. He had slept alone since his illness in a little room adjoining his study. He went in, undressed, and took up a novel of Zola, but did not read it; he fell to thinking. And in his imagination the desired recovery of the intestinal appendix had taken place. There had been absorption, rejection, reestablishment of the regular action.

"Why, it's all simply that," he said to himself. "One only wants to assist nature." He remembered the medicine, got up, took it, lay down on his back, watching for the medicine to act beneficially and overcome the pain. "It's only to take it regularly and avoid injurious influences; why, already I feel rather better, much better." He began to feel his side; it was not painful to the touch. "Yes, I don't feel it—really, much better already." He put out the candle and lay on his

side. "The appendix is getting better, absorption." Suddenly he felt the familiar, old, dull, gnawing ache, persistent, quiet, in earnest. In his mouth the same familiar loathsome taste. His heart sank, his brain felt dim, misty. "My God, my God!" he said, "again, again, and it will never cease." And suddenly the whole thing rose before him in quite a different aspect. "Intestinal appendix! kidney!" he said to himself. "It's not a question of the appendix, not a question of the kidney, but of life and … death. Yes, life has been and now it's going, going away, and I cannot stop it. Yes. Why deceive myself? Isn't it obvious to everyone, except me, that I'm dying, and it's only a question of weeks, of days—at once perhaps. There was light, and now there is darkness. I was here, and now I am going! Where?" A cold chill ran over him, his breath stopped. He heard nothing but the throbbing of his heart.

"I shall be no more, then what will there be? There'll be nothing. Where then shall I be when I'm no more? Can this be dying? No; I don't want to!" He jumped up, tried to light the candle; and fumbling with trembling hands, he dropped the candle and the candlestick on the floor and fell back again on the pillow. "Why trouble? it doesn't matter," he said to himself, staring with open eyes into the darkness. "Death. Yes, death. And they—all of them—don't understand, and don't want to understand, and feel no pity. They are playing." (He caught through the closed doors the faraway cadence of a voice and the accompaniment.) "They don't care, but they will die too. Fools! Me sooner and them later; but it will be the same for them. And they are merry. The beasts!" Anger stifled him. And he was agonisingly, insufferably miserable. "It cannot be that all men always have been doomed to this awful horror! He raised himself.

"There is something wrong in it; I must be calm, I must think it all over from the beginning." And then he began to consider. "Yes, the beginning of my illness. I knocked my side, and I was just the same, that day and the days after; it ached a little, then more, then doctors, then depression, misery, and again doctors; and I've gone on getting closer and closer to the abyss. Strength growing less. Nearer and nearer. And here I am, wasting away, no light in my eyes. I think of how to cure the appendix, but this is death. Can it be death?" Again a horror came over him; gasping for breath, he bent over, began feeling for the matches, and knocked his elbow against the bedside table. It was in his way and hurt him; he felt furious with it, in his anger knocked against it more violently, and upset it. And in despair, breathless, he fell back on his spine waiting for death to come that instant.

The visitors were leaving at that time. Praskovya Fyodorovna was seeing them out. She heard something fall, and came in.

"What is it?"

"Nothing, I dropped something by accident."

She went out, brought a candle. He was lying, breathing hard and fast, like a man who has run a mile, and staring with fixed eyes at her.

"What is it, Jean?"

"No—othing, I say. I dropped something."—"Why speak? She won't understand," he thought.

She certainly did not understand. She picked up the candle, lighted it for him, and went out hastily. She had to say goodbye to a departing guest. When she came back, he was lying in the same position on his back, looking upwards.

"How are you—worse?"

"Yes."

She shook her head, sat down.

"Do you know what, Jean? I wonder if we hadn't better send for Leshtchetitsky to see you here?"

This meant calling in the celebrated doctor, regardless of expense. He smiled malignantly, and said no. She sat a moment longer, went up to him, and kissed him on the forehead.

He hated her with all the force of his soul when she was kissing him, and had to make an effort not to push her away.

"Good night. Please God, you'll sleep."

"Yes."

VI

Ivan Ilyitch saw that he was dying, and was in continual despair.

At the bottom of his heart Ivan Ilyitch knew that he was dying; but so far from growing used to this idea, he simply did not grasp it—he was utterly unable to grasp it.

The example of the syllogism that he had learned in Kiseveter's logic—Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal—had seemed to him all his life correct only as regards Caius, but not at all as regards himself. In that case it was a question of Caius, a man, an abstract man, and it was perfectly true, but he was not Caius, and was not an abstract man; he had always been a creature quite, quite different from all others; he had been little Vanya with a mamma and papa, and Mitya and Volodya, with playthings and a coachman and

a nurse; afterwards with Katenka, with all the joys and griefs and ecstasies of childhood, boyhood, and youth. What did Caius know of the smell of the leathern ball Vanya had been so fond of? Had Caius kissed his mother's hand like that? Caius had not heard the silk rustle of his mother's skirts. He had not made a riot at school over the pudding. Had Caius been in love like that? Could Caius preside over the sittings of the court?

And Caius certainly was mortal, and it was right for him to die; but for me, little Vanya, Ivan Ilyitch, with all my feelings and ideas—for me it's a different matter. And it cannot be that I ought to die. That would be too awful.

That was his feeling.

"If I had to die like Caius, I should have known it was so, some inner voice would have told me so. But there was nothing of the sort in me. And I and all my friends, we felt that it was not at all the same as with Caius. And now here it is!" he said to himself. "It can't be! It can't be, but it is! How is it? How's one to understand it?" And he could not conceive it, and tried to drive away this idea as false, incorrect, and morbid, and to supplant it by other, correct, healthy ideas. But this idea, not as an idea merely, but as it were an actual fact, came back again and stood confronting him.

And to replace this thought he called up other thoughts, one after another, in the hope of finding support in them. He tried to get back into former trains of thought, which in old days had screened off the thought of death. But, strange to say, all that had in old days covered up, obliterated the sense of death, could not now produce the same effect. Latterly, Ivan Ilyitch spent the greater part of his time in these efforts to restore his old trains of thought which had shut off death. At one time he would say to himself, "I'll put myself into my official work; why, I used to live in it." And he would go to the law-courts, banishing every doubt. He would enter into conversation with his colleagues, and would sit carelessly, as his old habit was, scanning the crowd below dreamily, and with both his wasted hands he would lean on the arms of the oak armchair just as he always did; and bending over to a colleague, pass the papers to him and whisper to him, then suddenly dropping his eyes and sitting up straight, he would pronounce the familiar words that opened the proceedings. But suddenly in the middle, the pain in his side, utterly regardless of the stage he had reached in his conduct of the case, began its work. It riveted Ivan Ilyitch's attention. He drove away the thought of it, but it still did its work, and then *It* came and stood confronting him and looked at him, and he felt turned to

stone, and the light died away in his eyes, and he began to ask himself again, "Can it be that It is the only truth?" And his colleagues and his subordinates saw with surprise and distress that he, the brilliant, subtle judge, was losing the thread of his speech, was making blunders. He shook himself, tried to regain his self-control, and got somehow to the end of the sitting, and went home with the painful sense that his judicial labours could not as of old hide from him what he wanted to hide; that he could not by means of his official work escape from *It*. And the worst of it was that It drew him to itself not for him to do anything in particular, but simply for him to look at It straight in the face, to look at It and, doing nothing, suffer unspeakably.

And to save himself from this, Ivan Ilyitch sought amusements, other screens, and these screens he found, and for a little while they did seem to save him; but soon again they were not so much broken down as let the light through, as though It pierced through everything, and there was nothing that could shut It off.

Sometimes during those days he would go into the drawing-room he had furnished, that drawing-room where he had fallen, for which—how bitterly ludicrous it was for him to think of it!—for the decoration of which he had sacrificed his life, for he knew that it was that bruise that had started his illness. He went in and saw that the polished table had been scratched by something. He looked for the cause, and found it in the bronze clasps of the album, which had been twisted on one side. He took up the album, a costly one, which he had himself arranged with loving care, and was vexed at the carelessness of his daughter and her friends. Here a page was torn, here the photographs had been shifted out of their places. He carefully put it to rights again and bent the clasp back.

Then the idea occurred to him to move all this *établissement* of the albums to another corner where the flowers stood. He called the footman; or his daughter or his wife came to help him. They did not agree with him, contradicted him; he argued, got angry. But all that was very well, since he did not think of It; It was not in sight.

But then his wife would say, as he moved something himself, "Do let the servants do it, you'll hurt yourself again," and all at once It peeped through the screen; he caught a glimpse of It. He caught a glimpse of It, but still he hoped It would hide itself. Involuntarily though, he kept watch on his side; there it is just the same still, aching still, and now he cannot forget it, and *It* is staring openly at him from behind the flowers. What's the use of it all?

"And it's the fact that here, at that curtain, as if it had been

storming a fort, I lost my life. Is it possible? How awful and how silly! It cannot be! It cannot be, and it is."

He went into his own room, lay down, and was again alone with It. Face to face with it, and nothing to be done with It. Nothing but to look at It and shiver.

VII

How it came to pass during the third month of Ivan Ilyitch's illness, it would be impossible to say, for it happened little by little, imperceptibly, but it had come to pass that his wife and his daughter and his son and their servants and their acquaintances, and the doctors, and, most of all, he himself—all were aware that all interest in him for other people consisted now in the question how soon he would leave his place empty, free the living from the constraint of his presence, and be set free himself from his sufferings.

He slept less and less; they gave him opium, and began to inject morphine. But this did not relieve him. The dull pain he experienced in the half-asleep condition at first only relieved him as a change, but then it became as bad, or even more agonising, than the open pain. He had special things to eat prepared for him according to the doctors' prescriptions; but these dishes became more and more distasteful, more and more revolting to him.

Special arrangements, too, had to be made for his other physical needs, and this was a continual misery to him. Misery from the uncleanliness, the unseemliness, and the stench, from the feeling of another person having to assist in it.

But just from this most unpleasant side of his illness there came comfort to Ivan Ilyitch. There always came into his room on these occasions to clear up for him the peasant who waited at table, Gerasim.

Gerasim was a clean, fresh, young peasant, who had grown stout and hearty on the good fare in town. Always cheerful and bright. At first the sight of this lad, always cleanly dressed in the Russian style, engaged in this revolting task, embarrassed Ivan Ilyitch.

One day, getting up from the night-stool, too weak to replace his clothes, he dropped on to a soft low chair and looked with horror at his bare, powerless thighs, with the muscles so sharply standing out on them.

Then there came in with light, strong steps Gerasim, in his thick boots, diffusing a pleasant smell of tar from his boots, and bringing in

the freshness of the winter air. Wearing a clean hempen apron, and a clean cotton shirt, with his sleeves tucked up on his strong, bare young arms, without looking at Ivan Ilyitch, obviously trying to check the radiant happiness in his face so as not to hurt the sick man, he went up to the night-stool.

"Gerasim," said Ivan Ilyitch faintly.

Gerasim started, clearly afraid that he had done something amiss, and with a rapid movement turned towards the sick man his fresh, good-natured, simple young face, just beginning to be downy with the first growth of beard.

"Yes, your honour."

"I'm afraid this is very disagreeable for you. You must excuse me. I can't help it."

"Why, upon my word, sir!" And Gerasim's eyes beamed, and he showed his white young teeth in a smile. "What's a little trouble? It's a case of illness with you, sir."

And with his deft, strong arms he performed his habitual task, and went out, stepping lightly. And five minutes later, treading just as lightly, he came back.

Ivan Ilyitch was still sitting in the same way in the armchair.

"Gerasim," he said, when the latter had replaced the night-stool all sweet and clean, "please help me; come here." Gerasim went up to him. "Lift me up. It's difficult for me alone, and I've sent Dmitry away."

Gerasim went up to him; as lightly as he stepped he put his strong arms round him, deftly and gently lifted and supported him, with the other hand pulled up his trousers, and would have set him down again. But Ivan Ilyitch asked him to carry him to the sofa. Gerasim, without effort, carefully not squeezing him, led him, almost carrying him, to the sofa, and settled him there.

"Thank you; how neatly and well … you do everything."

Gerasim smiled again, and would have gone away. But Ivan Ilyitch felt his presence such a comfort that he was reluctant to let him go.

"Oh, move that chair near me, please. No, that one, under my legs. I feel easier when my legs are higher."

Gerasim picked up the chair, and without letting it knock, set it gently down on the ground just at the right place, and lifted Ivan Ilyitch's legs on to it. It seemed to Ivan Ilyitch that he was easier just at the moment when Gerasim lifted his legs higher.

"I'm better when my legs are higher," said Ivan Ilyitch. "Put that cushion under me."

Gerasim did so. Again he lifted his legs to put the cushion under them. Again it seemed to Ivan Ilyitch that he was easier at that moment when Gerasim held his legs raised. When he laid them down again, he felt worse.

"Gerasim," he said to him, "are you busy just now?"

"Not at all, sir," said Gerasim, who had learned among the town-bred servants how to speak to gentlefolks.

"What have you left to do?"

"Why, what have I to do? I've done everything, there's only the wood to chop for tomorrow."

"Then hold my legs up like that—can you?"

"To be sure, I can." Gerasim lifted the legs up. And it seemed to Ivan Ilyitch that in that position he did not feel the pain at all.

"But how about the wood?"

"Don't you trouble about that, sir. We shall have time enough."

Ivan Ilyitch made Gerasim sit and hold his legs, and began to talk to him. And, strange to say, he fancied he felt better while Gerasim had hold of his legs.

From that time forward Ivan Ilyitch would sometimes call Gerasim, and get him to hold his legs on his shoulders, and he liked talking with him. Gerasim did this easily, readily, simply, and with a good-nature that touched Ivan Ilyitch. Health, strength, and heartiness in all other people were offensive to Ivan Ilyitch; but the strength and heartiness of Gerasim did not mortify him, but soothed him.

Ivan Ilyitch's great misery was due to the deception that for some reason or other everyone kept up with him—that he was simply ill, and not dying, and that he need only keep quiet and follow the doctor's orders, and then some great change for the better would be the result. He knew that whatever they might do, there would be no result except more agonising sufferings and death. And he was made miserable by this lie, made miserable at their refusing to acknowledge what they all knew and he knew, by their persisting in lying over him about his awful position, and in forcing him too to take part in this lie. Lying, lying, this lying carried on over him on the eve of his death, and destined to bring that terrible, solemn act of his death down to the level of all their visits, curtains, sturgeons for dinner … was a horrible agony for Ivan Ilyitch. And, strange to say, many times when they had been going through the regular performance over him, he had been within a hair's-breadth of screaming at them: "Cease your lying! You know, and I know, that I'm dying; so do, at least, give over lying!" But he had never had the spirit to do this. The terrible, awful act of his dying was,

he saw, by all those about him, brought down to the level of a casual, unpleasant, and to some extent indecorous, incident (somewhat as they would behave with a person who should enter a drawing-room smelling unpleasant). It was brought down to this level by that very decorum to which he had been enslaved all his life. He saw that no one felt for him, because no one would even grasp his position. Gerasim was the only person who recognised the position, and felt sorry for him. And that was why Ivan Ilyitch was only at ease with Gerasim. He felt comforted when Gerasim sometimes supported his legs for whole nights at a stretch, and would not go away to bed, saying, "Don't you worry yourself, Ivan Ilyitch, I'll get sleep enough yet," or when suddenly dropping into the familiar peasant forms of speech, he added: "If thou weren't sick, but as 'tis, 'twould be strange if I didn't wait on thee." Gerasim alone did not lie; everything showed clearly that he alone understood what it meant, and saw no necessity to disguise it, and simply felt sorry for his sick, wasting master. He even said this once straight out, when Ivan Ilyitch was sending him away.

"We shall all die. So what's a little trouble?" he said, meaning by this to express that he did not complain of the trouble just because he was taking this trouble for a dying man, and he hoped that for him too someone would be willing to take the same trouble when his time came.

Apart from this deception, or in consequence of it, what made the greatest misery for Ivan Ilyitch was that no one felt for him as he would have liked them to feel for him. At certain moments, after prolonged suffering, Ivan Ilyitch, ashamed as he would have been to own it, longed more than anything for someone to feel sorry for him, as for a sick child. He longed to be petted, kissed, and wept over, as children are petted and comforted. He knew that he was an important member of the law-courts, that he had a beard turning grey, and that therefore it was impossible. But still he longed for it. And in his relations with Gerasim there was something approaching to that. And that was why being with Gerasim was a comfort to him. Ivan Ilyitch longs to weep, longs to be petted and wept over, and then there comes in a colleague, Shebek; and instead of weeping and being petted, Ivan Ilyitch puts on his serious, severe, earnest face, and from mere inertia gives his views on the effect of the last decision in the Court of Appeal, and obstinately insists upon them. This falsity around him and within him did more than anything to poison Ivan Ilyitch's last days.

VIII

It was morning. All that made it morning for Ivan Ilyitch was that Gerasim had gone away, and Pyotr the footman had come in; he had put out the candles, opened one of the curtains, and begun surreptitiously setting the room to rights. Whether it were morning or evening, Friday or Sunday, it all made no difference; it was always just the same thing. Gnawing, agonising pain never ceasing for an instant; the hopeless sense of life always ebbing away, but still not yet gone; always swooping down on him that fearful, hated death, which was the only reality, and always the same falsity. What were days, or weeks, or hours of the day to him?

"Will you have tea, sir?"

"He wants things done in their regular order. In the morning the family should have tea," he thought, and only said—

"No."

"Would you care to move on to the sofa?"

"He wants to make the room tidy, and I'm in his way. I'm uncleanness, disorder," he thought, and only said—

"No, leave me alone."

The servant still moved busily about his work. Ivan Ilyitch stretched out his hand. Pyotr went up to offer his services.

"What can I get you?"

"My watch."

Pyotr got out the watch, which lay just under his hand, and gave it him.

"Half-past eight. Are they up?"

"Not yet, sir. Vladimir Ivanovitch" (that was his son) "has gone to the high school, and Praskovya Fyodorovna gave orders that she was to be waked if you asked for her. Shall I send word?"

"No, no need. Should I try some tea?" he thought.

"Yes, tea … bring it."

Pyotr was on his way out. Ivan Ilyitch felt frightened of being left alone. "How keep him? Oh, the medicine. Pyotr, give me my medicine. Oh well, maybe, medicine may still be some good." He took the spoon, drank it. "No, it does no good. It's all rubbish, deception," he decided, as soon as he tasted the familiar, mawkish, hopeless taste. "No, I can't believe it now. But the pain, why this pain; if it would only cease for a minute." And he groaned. Pyotr turned round. "No, go on. Bring the tea."

Pyotr went away. Ivan Ilyitch, left alone, moaned, not so much

from the pain, awful as it was, as from misery. Always the same thing again and again, all these endless days and nights. If it would only be quicker. Quicker to what? Death, darkness. No, no. Anything better than death!

When Pyotr came in with the tea on a tray, Ivan Ilyitch stared for some time absentmindedly at him, not grasping who he was and what he wanted. Pyotr was disconcerted by this stare. And when he showed he was disconcerted, Ivan Ilyitch came to himself.

"Oh yes," he said, "tea, good, set it down. Only help me to wash and put on a clean shirt."

And Ivan Ilyitch began his washing. He washed his hands slowly, and then his face, cleaned his teeth, combed his hair, and looked in the looking-glass. He felt frightened at what he saw, especially at the way his hair clung limply to his pale forehead. When his shirt was being changed, he knew he would be still more terrified if he glanced at his body, and he avoided looking at himself. But at last it was all over. He put on his dressing-gown, covered himself with a rug, and sat in the armchair to drink his tea. For one moment he felt refreshed; but as soon as he began to drink the tea, again there was the same taste, the same pain. He forced himself to finish it, and lay down, stretching out his legs. He lay down and dismissed Pyotr.

Always the same. A gleam of hope flashes for a moment, then again the sea of despair roars about him again, and always pain, always pain, always heartache, and always the same thing. Alone it is awfully dreary; he longs to call someone, but he knows beforehand that with others present it will be worse. "Morphine again—only to forget again. I'll tell him, the doctor, that he must think of something else. It can't go on; it can't go on like this."

One hour, two hours pass like this. Then there is a ring at the front door. The doctor, perhaps. Yes, it is the doctor, fresh, hearty, fat, and cheerful, wearing that expression that seems to say, "You there are in a panic about something, but we'll soon set things right for you." The doctor is aware that this expression is hardly fitting here, but he has put it on once and for all, and can't take it off, like a man who has put on a frockcoat to pay a round of calls.

In a hearty, reassuring manner the doctor rubs his hands.

"I'm cold. It's a sharp frost. Just let me warm myself," he says with an expression, as though it's only a matter of waiting a little till he's warm, and as soon as he's warm he'll set everything to rights.

"Well, now, how are you?"

Ivan Ilyitch feels that the doctor would like to say, "How's the little

trouble?" but that he feels that he can't talk like that, and says, "How did you pass the night?"

Ivan Ilyitch looks at the doctor with an expression that asks—

"Is it possible you're never ashamed of lying?"

But the doctor does not care to understand this look.

And Ivan Ilyitch says—

"It's always just as awful. The pain never leaves me, never ceases. If only there were something!"

"Ah, you're all like that, all sick people say that. Come, now I do believe I'm thawed; even Praskovya Fyodorovna, who's so particular, could find no fault with my temperature. Well, now I can say good morning." And the doctor shakes hands.

And dropping his former levity, the doctor, with a serious face, proceeds to examine the patient, feeling his pulse, to take his temperature, and then the tappings and soundings begin.

Ivan Ilyitch knows positively and indubitably that it's all nonsense and empty deception; but when the doctor, kneeling down, stretches over him, putting his ear first higher, then lower, and goes through various gymnastic evolutions over him with a serious face, Ivan Ilyitch is affected by this, as he used sometimes to be affected by the speeches of the lawyers in court, though he was perfectly well aware that they were telling lies all the while and why they were telling lies.

The doctor, kneeling on the sofa, was still sounding him, when there was the rustle of Praskovya Fyodorovna's silk dress in the doorway, and she was heard scolding Pyotr for not having let her know that the doctor had come.

She comes in, kisses her husband, and at once begins to explain that she has been up a long while, and that it was only through a misunderstanding that she was not there when the doctor came.

Ivan Ilyitch looks at her, scans her all over, and sets down against her her whiteness and plumpness, and the cleanness of her hands and neck, and the glossiness of her hair, and the gleam full of life in her eyes. With all the force of his soul he hates her. And when she touches him it makes him suffer from the thrill of hatred he feels for her.

Her attitude to him and his illness is still the same. Just as the doctor had taken up a certain line with the patient which he was not now able to drop, so she too had taken up a line with him—that he was not doing something he ought to do, and was himself to blame, and she was lovingly reproaching him for his neglect, and she could not now get out of this attitude.

"Why, you know, he won't listen to me; he doesn't take his medicine

at the right times. And what's worse still, he insists on lying in a position that surely must be bad for him—with his legs in the air."

She described how he made Gerasim hold his legs up.

The doctor smiled with kindly condescension that said, "Oh well, it can't be helped, these sick people do take up such foolish fancies; but we must forgive them."

When the examination was over, the doctor looked at his watch, and then Praskovya Fyodorovna informed Ivan Ilyitch that it must of course be as he liked, but she had sent today for a celebrated doctor, and that he would examine him, and have a consultation with Mihail Danilovitch (that was the name of their regular doctor).

"Don't oppose it now, please. This I'm doing entirely for my own sake," she said ironically, meaning it to be understood that she was doing it all for his sake, and was only saying this to give him no right to refuse her request. He lay silent, knitting his brows. He felt that he was hemmed in by such a tangle of falsity that it was hard to disentangle anything from it.

Everything she did for him was entirely for her own sake, and she told him she was doing for her own sake what she actually was doing for her own sake as something so incredible that he would take it as meaning the opposite.

At half-past eleven the celebrated doctor came. Again came the sounding, and then grave conversation in his presence and in the other room about the kidney and the appendix, and questions and answers, with such an air of significance, that again, instead of the real question of life and death, which was now the only one that confronted him, the question that came uppermost was of the kidney and the appendix, which were doing something not as they ought to do, and were for that reason being attacked by Mihail Danilovitch and the celebrated doctor, and forced to mend their ways.

The celebrated doctor took leave of him with a serious, but not a hopeless face. And to the timid question that Ivan Ilyitch addressed to him while he lifted his eyes, shining with terror and hope, up towards him, *Was there a chance of recovery?* he answered that he could not answer for it, but that there was a chance. The look of hope with which Ivan Ilyitch watched the doctor out was so piteous that, seeing it, Praskovya Fyodorovna positively burst into tears, as she went out of the door to hand the celebrated doctor his fee in the next room.

The gleam of hope kindled by the doctor's assurance did not last long. Again the same room, the same pictures, the curtains, the wall-paper, the medicine-bottles, and ever the same, his aching suffering

body. And Ivan Ilyitch began to moan; they gave him injections, and he sank into oblivion. When he waked up it was getting dark; they brought him his dinner. He forced himself to eat some broth; and again everything the same, and again the coming night.

After dinner at seven o'clock, Praskovya Fyodorovna came into his room, dressed as though to go to a soirée with her full bosom laced in tight, and traces of powder on her face. She had in the morning mentioned to him that they were going to the theatre. Sarah Bernhardt was visiting the town, and they had a box, which he had insisted on their taking. By now he had forgotten about it, and her smart attire was an offence to him. But he concealed this feeling when he recollected that he had himself insisted on their taking a box and going, because it was an aesthetic pleasure, beneficial and instructive for the children.

Praskovya Fyodorovna came in satisfied with herself, but yet with something of a guilty air. She sat down, asked how he was, as he saw, simply for the sake of asking, and not for the sake of learning anything, knowing indeed that there was nothing to learn, and began telling him how absolutely necessary it was; how she would not have gone for anything, but the box had been taken, and Ellen, their daughter, and Petrishtchev (the examining lawyer, the daughter's suitor) were going, and that it was out of the question to let them go alone. But that she would have liked much better to stay with him. If only he would be sure to follow the doctor's prescription while she was away.

"Oh, and Fyodor Dmitryevitch" (the suitor) "would like to come in. May he? And Liza?"

"Yes, let them come in."

The daughter came in, in full dress, her fresh young body bare, while his body made him suffer so. But she made a show of it; she was strong, healthy, obviously in love, and impatient of the illness, suffering, and death that hindered her happiness.

Fyodor Dmitryevitch came in too in evening dress, his hair curled *à la Capoul* with his long sinewy neck tightly fenced round by a white collar, with his vast expanse of white chest and strong thighs displayed in narrow black trousers, with one white glove in his hand and a crush opera hat.

Behind him crept in unnoticed the little high school boy in his new uniform, poor fellow, in gloves, and with that awful blue ring under his eyes that Ivan Ilyitch knew the meaning of.

He always felt sorry for his son. And pitiable indeed was his scared face of sympathetic suffering. Except Gerasim, Ivan Ilyitch fancied that Volodya was the only one that understood and was sorry.

They all sat down; again they asked how he was. A silence followed. Liza asked her mother about the opera-glass. An altercation ensued between the mother and daughter as to who had taken it, and where it had been put. It turned into an unpleasant squabble.

Fyodor Dmitryevitch asked Ivan Ilyitch whether he had seen Sarah Bernhardt? Ivan Ilyitch could not at first catch the question that was asked him, but then he said, "No, have you seen her before?"

"Yes, in *Adrienne Lecouvreur*."

Praskovya Fyodorovna observed that she was particularly good in that part. The daughter made some reply. A conversation sprang up about the art and naturalness of her acting, that conversation that is continually repeated and always the same.

In the middle of the conversation Fyodor Dmitryevitch glanced at Ivan Ilyitch and relapsed into silence. The others looked at him and became mute too. Ivan Ilyitch was staring with glittering eyes straight before him, obviously furious with them. This had to be set right, but it could not anyhow be set right. This silence had somehow to be broken. No one would venture on breaking it, and all began to feel alarmed that the decorous deception was somehow breaking down, and the facts would be exposed to all. Liza was the first to pluck up courage. She broke the silence. She tried to cover up what they were all feeling, but inadvertently she gave it utterance.

"*If we are going*, though, it's time to start," she said, glancing at her watch, a gift from her father; and with a scarcely perceptible meaning smile to the young man, referring to something only known to themselves, she got up with a rustle of her skirts.

They all got up, said goodbye, and went away. When they were gone, Ivan Ilyitch fancied he was easier; there was no falsity—that had gone away with them, but the pain remained. That continual pain, that continual terror, made nothing harder, nothing easier. It was always worse.

Again came minute after minute, hour after hour, still the same and still no end, and ever more terrible the inevitable end.

"Yes, send Gerasim," he said in answer to Pyotr's question.

IX

Late at night his wife came back. She came in on tiptoe, but he heard her, opened his eyes, and made haste to close them again. She wanted to send away Gerasim and sit up with him herself instead. He opened

his eyes and said, "No, go away."

"Are you in great pain?"

"Always the same."

"Take some opium."

He agreed, and drank it. She went away.

Till three o'clock he slept a miserable sleep. It seemed to him that he and his pain were being thrust somewhere into a narrow, deep, black sack, and they kept pushing him further and further in, and still could not thrust him to the bottom. And this operation was awful to him, and was accompanied with agony. And he was afraid, and yet wanted to fall into it, and struggled and yet tried to get into it. And all of a sudden he slipped and fell and woke up. Gerasim, still the same, is sitting at the foot of the bed half-dozing peacefully, patient. And he is lying with his wasted legs clad in stockings, raised on Gerasim's shoulders, the same candle burning in the alcove, and the same interminable pain.

"Go away, Gerasim," he whispered.

"It's all right, sir. I'll stay a bit longer."

"No, go away."

He took his legs down, lay sideways on his arm, and he felt very sorry for himself. He only waited till Gerasim had gone away into the next room; he could restrain himself no longer, and cried like a child. He cried at his own helplessness, at his awful loneliness, at the cruelty of people, at the cruelty of God, at the absence of God.

"Why hast Thou done all this? What brought me to this? Why, why torture me so horribly?"

He did not expect an answer, and wept indeed that there was and could be no answer. The pain grew more acute again, but he did not stir, did not call.

He said to himself, "Come, more then; come, strike me! But what for? What have I done to Thee? what for?"

Then he was still, ceased weeping, held his breath, and was all attention; he listened, as it were, not to a voice uttering sounds, but to the voice of his soul, to the current of thoughts that rose up within him.

"What is it you want?" was the first clear idea able to be put into words that he grasped.

"What? Not to suffer, to live," he answered.

And again he was utterly plunged into attention so intense that even the pain did not distract him.

"To live? Live how?" the voice of his soul was asking.

"Why, live as I used to live before—happily and pleasantly."

"As you used to live before—happily and pleasantly?" queried the voice. And he began going over in his imagination the best moments of his pleasant life. But, strange to say, all these best moments of his pleasant life seemed now not at all what they had seemed then. All—except the first memories of childhood—there, in his childhood there had been something really pleasant in which one could have lived if it had come back. But the creature who had this pleasant experience was no more; it was like a memory of someone else.

As soon as he reached the beginning of what had resulted in him as he was now, Ivan Ilyitch, all that had seemed joys to him then now melted away before his eyes and were transformed into something trivial, and often disgusting.

And the further he went from childhood, the nearer to the actual present, the more worthless and uncertain were the joys. It began with life at the school of jurisprudence. Then there had still been something genuinely good; then there had been gaiety; then there had been friendship; then there had been hopes. But in the higher classes these good moments were already becoming rarer. Later on, during the first period of his official life, at the governor's, good moments appeared; but it was all mixed, and less and less of it was good. And further on even less was good, and the further he went the less good there was.

His marriage … as gratuitous as the disillusion of it and the smell of his wife's breath and the sensuality, the hypocrisy! And that deadly official life, and anxiety about money, and so for one year, and two, and ten, and twenty, and always the same thing. And the further he went, the more deadly it became. "As though I had been going steadily downhill, imagining that I was going uphill. So it was in fact. In public opinion I was going uphill, and steadily as I got up it life was ebbing away from me. … And now the work's done, there's only to die."

"But what is this? What for? It cannot be! It cannot be that life has been so senseless, so loathsome? And if it really was so loathsome and senseless, then why die, and die in agony? There's something wrong."

"Can it be I have not lived as one ought?" suddenly came into his head. "But how not so, when I've done everything as it should be done?" he said, and at once dismissed this only solution of all the enigma of life and death as something utterly out of the question.

"What do you want now? To live? Live how? Live as you live at the courts when the usher booms out: 'The judge is coming!' … The

judge is coming, the judge is coming," he repeated to himself. "Here he is, the judge! But I'm not to blame!" he shrieked in fury. "What's it for?" And he left off crying, and turning with his face to the wall, fell to pondering always on the same question, "What for, why all this horror?"

But however much he pondered, he could not find an answer. And whenever the idea struck him, as it often did, that it all came of his never having lived as he ought, he thought of all the correctness of his life and dismissed this strange idea.

X

Another fortnight had passed. Ivan Ilyitch could not now get up from the sofa. He did not like lying in bed, and lay on the sofa. And lying almost all the time facing the wall, in loneliness he suffered all the inexplicable agonies, and in loneliness pondered always that inexplicable question. What is it? Can it be true that it's death? And an inner voice answered, "Yes, it is true." "Why these agonies?" and a voice answered, "For no reason." Beyond and besides this there was nothing.

From the very beginning of his illness, ever since Ivan Ilyitch first went to the doctors, his life had been split up into two contradictory moods, which were continually alternating—one was despair and the anticipation of an uncomprehended and awful death; the other was hope and an absorbed watching over the actual condition of his body. First there was nothing confronting him but a kidney or intestine which had temporarily declined to perform their duties, then there was nothing but unknown awful death, which there was no escaping.

These two moods had alternated from the very beginning of the illness; but the further the illness progressed, the more doubtful and fantastic became the conception of the kidney, and the more real the sense of approaching death.

He had but to reflect on what he had been three months before and what he was now, to reflect how steadily he had been going downhill, for every possibility of hope to be shattered.

Of late, in the loneliness in which he found himself, lying with his face to the back of the sofa, a loneliness in the middle of a populous town and of his numerous acquaintances and his family, a loneliness than which none more complete could be found anywhere—not at the bottom of the sea, not deep down in the earth;—of late in this fearful loneliness Ivan Ilyitch had lived only in imagination in the past. One

by one the pictures of his past rose up before him. It always began from what was nearest in time and went back to the most remote, to childhood, and rested there. If Ivan Ilyitch thought of the stewed prunes that had been offered him for dinner that day, his mind went back to the damp, wrinkled French plum of his childhood, of its peculiar taste and the flow of saliva when the stone was sucked; and along with this memory of a taste there rose up a whole series of memories of that period—his nurse, his brother, his playthings. "I mustn't … it's too painful," Ivan Ilyitch said to himself, and he brought himself back to the present. The button on the back of the sofa and the creases in the morocco. "Morocco's dear, and doesn't wear well; there was a quarrel over it. But the morocco was different, and different too the quarrel when we tore father's portfolio and were punished, and mamma bought us the tarts." And again his mind rested on his childhood, and again it was painful, and he tried to drive it away and think of something else.

And again at that point, together with that chain of associations, quite another chain of memories came into his heart, of how his illness had grown up and become more acute. It was the same there, the further back the more life there had been. There had been both more that was good in life and more of life itself. And the two began to melt into one. "Just as the pain goes on getting worse and worse, so has my whole life gone on getting worse and worse," he thought. One light spot was there at the back, at the beginning of life, and then it kept getting blacker and blacker, and going faster and faster. "In inverse ratio to the square of the distance from death," thought Ivan Ilyitch. And the image of a stone falling downwards with increasing velocity sank into his soul. Life, a series of increasing sufferings, falls more and more swiftly to the end, the most fearful sufferings. "I am falling." He shuddered, shifted himself, would have resisted, but he knew beforehand that he could not resist; and again, with eyes weary with gazing at it, but unable not to gaze at what was before him, he stared at the back of the sofa and waited, waited expecting that fearful fall and shock and dissolution. "Resistance is impossible," he said to himself. "But if one could at least comprehend what it's for? Even that's impossible. It could be explained if one were to say that I hadn't lived as I ought. But that can't be alleged," he said to himself, thinking of all the regularity, correctness, and propriety of his life. "That really can't be admitted," he said to himself, his lips smiling ironically as though someone could see his smile and be deceived by it. "No explanation! Agony, death. … What for?"

XI

So passed a fortnight. During that fortnight an event occurred that had been desired by Ivan Ilyitch and his wife. Petrishtchev made a formal proposal. This took place in the evening. Next day Praskovya Fyodorovna went in to her husband, revolving in her mind how to inform him of Fyodor Dmitryevitch's proposal, but that night there had been a change for the worse in Ivan Ilyitch. Praskovya Fyodorovna found him on the same sofa, but in a different position. He was lying on his face, groaning, and staring straight before him with a fixed gaze.

She began talking of remedies. He turned his stare on her. She did not finish what she had begun saying; such hatred of her in particular was expressed in that stare.

"For Christ's sake, let me die in peace," he said.

She would have gone away, but at that moment the daughter came in and went up to say good morning to him. He looked at his daughter just as at his wife, and to her inquiries how he was, he told her drily that they would soon all be rid of him. Both were silent, sat a little while, and went out.

"How are we to blame?" said Liza to her mother. "As though we had done it! I'm sorry for papa, but why punish us?"

At the usual hour the doctor came. Ivan Ilyitch answered, "Yes, no," never taking his exasperated stare from him, and towards the end he said, "Why, you know that you can do nothing, so let me be."

"We can relieve your suffering," said the doctor.

"Even that you can't do; let me be."

The doctor went into the drawing-room and told Praskovya Fyodorovna that it was very serious, and that the only resource left them was opium to relieve his sufferings, which must be terrible. The doctor said his physical sufferings were terrible, and that was true; but even more terrible than his physical sufferings were his mental sufferings, and in that lay his chief misery.

His moral sufferings were due to the fact that during that night, as he looked at the sleepy, good-natured, broad-cheeked face of Gerasim, the thought had suddenly come into his head, "What if in reality all my life, my conscious life, has been not the right thing?" The thought struck him that what he had regarded before as an utter impossibility, that he had spent his life not as he ought, might be the truth. It struck him that those scarcely detected impulses of struggle within him against what was considered good by persons of higher position, scarcely detected impulses which he had dismissed, that they might be

the real thing, and everything else might be not the right thing. And his official work, and his ordering of his daily life and of his family, and these social and official interests—all that might be not the right thing. He tried to defend it all to himself. And suddenly he felt all the weakness of what he was defending. And it was useless to defend it.

"But if it's so," he said to himself, "and I am leaving life with the consciousness that I have lost all that was given me, and there's no correcting it, then what?" He lay on his back and began going over his whole life entirely anew. When he saw the footman in the morning, then his wife, then his daughter, then the doctor, every movement they made, every word they uttered, confirmed for him the terrible truth that had been revealed to him in the night. In them he saw himself, saw all in which he had lived, and saw distinctly that it was all not the right thing; it was a horrible, vast deception that concealed both life and death. This consciousness intensified his physical agonies, multiplied them tenfold. He groaned and tossed from side to side and pulled at the covering over him. It seemed to him that it was stifling him and weighing him down. And for that he hated them.

They gave him a big dose of opium; he sank into unconsciousness; but at dinnertime the same thing began again. He drove them all away, and tossed from side to side.

His wife came to him and said, "Jean, darling, do this for my sake" (for my sake?). "It can't do harm, and it often does good. Why, it's nothing. And often in health people—"

He opened his eyes wide.

"What? Take the sacrament? What for? No. Besides …"

She began to cry.

"Yes, my dear? I'll send for our priest, he's so nice."

"All right, very well," he said.

When the priest came and confessed him he was softened, felt as it were a relief from his doubts, and consequently from his sufferings, and there came a moment of hope. He began once more thinking of the intestinal appendix and the possibility of curing it. He took the sacrament with tears in his eyes.

When they laid him down again after the sacrament for a minute, he felt comfortable, and again the hope of life sprang up. He began to think about the operation which had been suggested to him. "To live, I want to live," he said to himself. His wife came in to congratulate him; she uttered the customary words and added—

"It's quite true, isn't it, that you're better?"

Without looking at her, he said, "Yes."

Her dress, her figure, the expression of her face, the tone of her voice—all told him the same: "Not the right thing. All that in which you lived and are living is lying, deceit, hiding life and death away from you." And as soon as he had formed that thought, hatred sprang up in him, and with that hatred agonising physical sufferings, and with these sufferings the sense of inevitable, approaching ruin. Something new was happening; there were screwing and shooting pains, and a tightness in his breathing.

The expression of his face as he uttered that "Yes" was terrible. After uttering that "Yes," looking her straight in the face, he turned on to his face, with a rapidity extraordinary in his weakness, and shrieked—

"Go away, go away, let me be!"

XII

From that moment there began the scream that never ceased for three days, and was so awful that through two closed doors one could not hear it without horror. At the moment when he answered his wife he grasped that he had fallen, that there was no return, that the end had come, quite the end, while doubt was still as unsolved, still remained doubt.

"Oo! Oo—o! Oo!" he screamed in varying intonations. He had begun screaming, "I don't want to!" and so had gone on screaming on the same vowel sound—oo!

All those three days, during which time did not exist for him, he was struggling in that black sack into which he was being thrust by an unseen resistless force. He struggled as the man condemned to death struggles in the hands of the executioner, knowing that he cannot save himself. And every moment he felt that in spite of all his efforts to struggle against it, he was getting nearer and nearer to what terrified him. He felt that his agony was due both to his being thrust into this black hole and still more to his not being able to get right into it. What hindered him from getting into it was the claim that his life had been good. That justification of his life held him fast and would not let him get forward, and it caused him more agony than all.

All at once some force struck him in the chest, in the side, and stifled his breathing more than ever; he rolled forward into the hole, and there at the end there was some sort of light. It had happened with him, as it had sometimes happened to him in a railway carriage, when he had thought he was going forward while he was going back,

and all of a sudden recognised his real direction.

"Yes, it has all been not the right thing," he said to himself, "but that's no matter." He could, he could do the right thing. "What is the right thing?" he asked himself, and suddenly he became quiet.

This was at the end of the third day, two hours before his death. At that very moment the schoolboy had stealthily crept into his father's room and gone up to his bedside. The dying man was screaming and waving his arms. His hand fell on the schoolboy's head. The boy snatched it, pressed it to his lips, and burst into tears.

At that very moment Ivan Ilyitch had rolled into the hole, and caught sight of the light, and it was revealed to him that his life had not been what it ought to have been, but that that could still be set right. He asked himself, "What is the right thing?"—and became quiet, listening. Then he felt someone was kissing his hand. He opened his eyes and glanced at his son. He felt sorry for him. His wife went up to him. He glanced at her. She was gazing at him with open mouth, the tears unwiped streaming over her nose and cheeks, a look of despair on her face. He felt sorry for her.

"Yes, I'm making them miserable," he thought. "They're sorry, but it will be better for them when I die." He would have said this, but had not the strength to utter it. "Besides, why speak, I must act," he thought. With a glance to his wife he pointed to his son and said—

"Take away … sorry for him. … And you too …" He tried to say "forgive," but said "forgo" … and too weak to correct himself, shook his hand, knowing that He would understand whose understanding mattered.

And all at once it became clear to him that what had tortured him and would not leave him was suddenly dropping away all at once on both sides and on ten sides and on all sides. He was sorry for them, must act so that they might not suffer. Set them free and be free himself of those agonies. "How right and how simple!" he thought. "And the pain?" he asked himself. "Where's it gone? Eh, where are you, pain?"

He began to watch for it.

"Yes, here it is. Well what of it, let the pain be."

"And death. Where is it?"

He looked for his old accustomed terror of death, and did not find it. "Where is it? What death?" There was no terror, because death was not either.

In the place of death there was light.

"So this is it!" he suddenly exclaimed aloud.

"What joy!"

To him all this passed in a single instant, and the meaning of that instant suffered no change after. For those present his agony lasted another two hours. There was a rattle in his throat, a twitching in his wasted body. Then the rattle and the gasping came at longer and longer intervals.

"It is over!" someone said over him.

He caught those words and repeated them in his soul.

"Death is over," he said to himself. "It's no more."

He drew in a breath, stopped midway in the breath, stretched and died.

The Kreutzer Sonata

> But I say unto you, that everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.
>
> The disciples said unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given.

I

It was early spring, and the second day of our journey. Passengers going short distances entered and left our carriage, but three others, like myself, had come all the way with the train. One was a lady, plain and no longer young, who smoked, had a harassed look, and wore a mannish coat and cap; another was an acquaintance of hers, a talkative man of about forty, whose things looked neat and new; the third was a rather short man who kept himself apart. He was not old, but his curly hair had gone prematurely grey. His movements were abrupt and his unusually glittering eyes moved rapidly from one object to another. He wore an old overcoat, evidently from a first-rate tailor, with an astrakhan collar, and a tall astrakhan cap. When he unbuttoned his overcoat a sleeveless Russian coat and embroidered shirt showed beneath it. A peculiarity of this man was a strange sound

he emitted, something like a clearing of his throat, or a laugh begun and sharply broken off.

All the way this man had carefully avoided making acquaintance or making any intercourse with his fellow passengers. When spoken to by those near him he gave short and abrupt answers, and at other times read, looked out of the window, smoked, or drank tea and ate something he took out of an old bag.

It seemed to me that his loneliness depressed him, and I made several attempts to converse with him, but whenever our eyes met, which happened often as he sat nearly opposite me, he turned away and took up his book or looked out of the window.

Towards the second evening, when our train stopped at a large station, this nervous man fetched himself some boiling water and made tea. The man with the neat new things—a lawyer as I found out later—and his neighbor, the smoking lady with the mannish coat, went to the refreshment room to drink tea.

During their absence several new passengers entered the carriage, among them a tall, shaven, wrinkled old man, evidently a tradesman, in a coat lined with skunk fur, and a cloth cap with an enormous peak. The tradesman sat down opposite the seats of the lady and the lawyer, and immediately started a conversation with a young man who had also entered at that station and, judging by his appearance, was a tradesman's clerk.

I was sitting the other side of the gangway and as the train was standing still I could hear snatches of their conversation when nobody was passing between us. The tradesman began by saying that he was going to his estate which was only one station farther on; then as usual the conversation turned to prices and trade, and they spoke of the state of business in Moscow and then of the Nízhni-Nóvgorod Fair. The clerk began to relate how a wealthy merchant, known to both of them, had gone on the spree at the fair, but the old man interrupted him by telling of the orgies he had been at in former times at Kunávin Fair. He evidently prided himself on the part he had played in them, and recounted with pleasure how he and some acquaintances, together with the merchant they had been speaking of, had once got drunk at Kunávin and played such a trick that he had to tell of it in a whisper. The clerk's roar of laughter filled the whole carriage; the old man laughed also, exposing two yellow teeth.

Not expecting to hear anything interesting, I got up to stroll about the platform till the train should start. At the carriage door I met the lawyer and the lady who were talking with animation as they ap-

proached.

"You won't have time," said the sociable lawyer, "the second bell will ring in a moment."[8]

And the bell did ring before I had gone the length of the train. When I returned, the animated conversation between the lady and the lawyer was proceeding. The old tradesman sat silent opposite to them, looking sternly before him, and occasionally mumbled disapprovingly as if chewing something.

"Then she plainly informed her husband," the lawyer was smilingly saying as I passed him, "that she was not able, and did not wish, to live with him since …"

He went on to say something I could not hear. Several other passengers came in after me. The guard passed, a porter hurried in, and for some time the noise made their voices inaudible. When all was quiet again the conversation had evidently turned from the particular case to general considerations.

The lawyer was saying that public opinion in Europe was occupied with the question of divorce, and that cases of "that kind" were occurring more and more often in Russia. Noticing that his was the only voice audible, he stopped his discourse and turned to the old man.

"Those things did not happen in the old days, did they?" he said, smiling pleasantly.

The old man was about to reply, but the train moved and he took off his cap, crossed himself, and whispered a prayer. The lawyer turned away his eyes and waited politely. Having finished his prayer and crossed himself three times the old man set his cap straight, pulled it well down over his forehead, changed his position, and began to speak.

"They used to happen even then, sir, but less often," he said. "As times are now they can't help happening. People have got too educated."

The train moved faster and faster and jolted over the joints of the rails, making it difficult to hear, but being interested I moved nearer. The nervous man with the glittering eyes opposite me, evidently also interested, listened without changing his place.

"What is wrong with education?" said the lady, with a scarcely perceptible smile. "Surely it can't be better to marry as they used to in the old days when the bride and bridegroom did not even see one another before the wedding," she continued, answering not what her

[8]It was customary in Russia for a first, second, and third bell to ring before a train left a station. —*A. M.*

interlocutor had said but what she thought he would say, in the way many ladies have. "Without knowing whether they loved, or whether they could love, they married just anybody, and were wretched all their lives. And you think that this was better?" she said, evidently addressing me and the lawyer chiefly and least of all the old man with whom she was talking.

"They've got so very educated," the tradesman reiterated, looking contemptuously at the lady and leaving her question unanswered.

"It would be interesting to know how you explain the connection between education and matrimonial discord," said the lawyer, with a scarcely perceptible smile.

The tradesman was about to speak, but the lady interrupted him.

"No," she said, "those times have passed." But the lawyer stopped her.

"Yes, but allow the gentleman to express his views."

"Foolishness comes from education," the old man said categorically.

"They make people who don't love one another marry, and then wonder that they live in discord," the lady hastened to say, turning to look at the lawyer, at me, and even at the clerk, who had got up and, leaning on the back of the seat, was smilingly listening to the conversation. "It's only animals, you know, that can be paired off as their master likes; but human beings have their own inclinations and attachments," said the lady, with an evident desire to annoy the tradesman.

"You should not talk like that, madam," said the old man, "animals are cattle, but human beings have a law given them."

"Yes, but how is one to live with a man when there is no love?" the lady again hastened to express her argument, which had probably seemed very new to her.

"They used not to go into that," said the old man in an impressive tone. "It is only now that all this has sprung up. The least thing makes them say: 'I will leave you!' The fashion has spread even to the peasants. 'Here you are!' she says. 'Here, take your shirts and trousers and I will go with Vánka; his head is curlier than yours.' What can you say? the first thing that should be required of a woman is fear!"

The clerk glanced at the lawyer, at the lady, and at me, apparently suppressing a smile and prepared to ridicule or to approve of the tradesman's words according to the reception they met with.

"Fear of what?" asked the lady.

"Why this: Let her fear her husband! That fear!"

"Oh, the time for that, sir, has passed," said the lady with a certain

viciousness.

"No, madam, that time cannot pass. As she, Eve, was made from the rib of a man, so it will remain to the end of time," said the old man, jerking his head with such sternness and such a victorious look that the clerk at once concluded that victory was on his side, and laughed loudly.

"Ah yes, that's the way you men argue," said the lady unyieldingly, and turned to us. "You have given yourselves freedom but want to shut women up in a tower.[9] You no doubt permit yourselves everything."

"No one is permitting anything, but a man does not bring offspring into the home; while a woman—a wife—is a leaky vessel," the tradesman continued insistently. His tone was so impressive that it evidently vanquished his hearers, and even the lady felt crushed but still did not give in.

"Yes, but I think you will agree that a woman is a human being and has feelings as a man has. What is she to do then, if she does not love her husband?"

"Does not love!" said the tradesman severely, moving his brows and lips. "She'll love, no fear!" this unexpected argument particularly pleased the clerk, and he emitted a sound of approval.

"Oh, no, she won't!" the lady began. "And when there is no love you can't enforce it."

"Well, and supposing the wife is unfaithful, what then?" asked the lawyer.

"That is not admissible," said the old man. "One has to see to that."

"But if it happens, what then? You know it does occur."

"It happens among some, but not among us," said the old man.

All were silent. The clerk moved, came still nearer, and, evidently unwilling to be behind hand, began with a smile.

"Yes, a young fellow of ours had a scandal. It was a difficult case to deal with. It too was a case of a woman who was a bad lot. She began to play the devil, and the young fellow is respectable and cultured. At first it was with one of the office clerks. The husband tried to persuade her with kindness. She would not stop, but played all sorts of dirty tricks. Then she began to steal his money. He beat her, but she only grew worse. Carried on intrigues, if I may mention it, with an unchristened Jew. What was he to do? He turned her out altogether

[9]Literally "in the *terem*," the *terem* being the woman's quarter where in olden times the women of a Russian family used to be secluded in oriental fashion. —*A. M.*

and lives as a bachelor, while she gads about."

"Because he is a fool," said the old man. "If he'd pulled her up properly from the first and not let her have way, she'd be living with him, no fear! It's giving way at first that counts. Don't trust your horse in the field, or your wife in the house."

At that moment the guard entered to collect the tickets for the next station. The old man gave up his. "Yes, the female sex must be curbed in time or else all is lost!"

"Yes, but you yourself just now were speaking about the way married men amuse themselves at the Kunávin Fair," I could not help saying.

"That's a different matter," said the old man and relapsed into silence.

When the whistle sounded the tradesman rose, got out his bag from under the seat, buttoned up his coat, and slightly lifting his cap went out of the carriage.

II

As soon as the old man had gone several voices were raised.

"A daddy of the old style!" remarked the clerk.

"A living *Domostróy*!"[10] said the lady. "What barbarous views of women and marriage!"

"Yes, we are far from the European understanding of marriage," said the lawyer.[11]

"The chief thing such people do not understand," continued the lady, "is that marriage without love is not marriage; that love sanctifies marriage, and that real marriage is only such as is sanctified by love."

The clerk listened smilingly, trying to store up for future use all he could of the clever conversation.

In the midst of the lady's remarks we heard, behind me, a sound like that of a broken laugh or sob; and on turning round we saw my neighbor, the lonely grey-haired man with the glittering eyes, who had approached unnoticed during our conversation, which evidently interested him. He stood with his arms on the back of the seat, evidently much excited; his face was red and a muscle twitched in his cheek.

[10] *The Housebuilder*, a sixteenth-century manual, by the monk Silvester, on religion and household management. —*A. M.*

[11] One Russian edition adds: "First woman's rights, then civil marriage, and then divorce, come as unsettled questions." —*A. M.*

"What kind of love … love … is it that sanctifies marriage?" he asked hesitatingly.

Noticing the speaker's agitation, the lady tried to answer him as gently and fully as possible.

"True love … When such love exists between a man and a woman, then marriage is possible," she said.

"Yes, but how is one to understand what is meant by 'true love'?" said the gentleman with the glittering eyes timidly and with an awkward smile.

"Everybody knows what love is," replied the lady, evidently wishing to break off her conversation with him.

"But I don't," said the man. "You must define what you understand …"

"Why? It's very simple," she said, but stopped to consider. "Love? Love is an exclusive preference for one above everybody else," said the lady.

"Preference for how long? A month, two days, or half an hour?" said the grey-haired man and began to laugh.

"Excuse me, we are evidently not speaking of the same thing."

"Oh, yes! Exactly the same."

"She means," interposed the lawyer, pointing to the lady, "that in the first place marriage must be the outcome of attachment—or love, if you please—and only where that exists is marriage sacred, so to speak. Secondly, that marriage when not based on natural attachment—love, if you prefer the word—lacks the element that makes it morally binding. Do I understand you rightly?" He added, addressing the lady.

The lady indicated her approval of his explanation by a nod of her head.

"It follows …" the lawyer continued—but the nervous man whose eyes now glowed as if aflame and who had evidently restrained himself with difficulty, began without letting the lawyer finish: "Yes, I mean exactly the same thing, a preference for one person over everybody else, and I am only asking: a preference for how long?"

"For how long? For a long time; for life sometimes," replied the lady, shrugging her shoulders.

"Oh, but that happens only in novels and never in real life. In real life this preference for one may last for years (that happens very rarely), more often for months, or perhaps for weeks, days, or hours," he said, evidently aware that he was astonishing everybody by his views and pleased that it was so.

"Oh, what are you saying?" "But no …" "No, allow me …" we all

three began at once. Even the clerk uttered an indefinite sound of disapproval.

"Yes, I know," the grey-haired man shouted above our voices, "you are talking about what is supposed to be, but I am speaking of what is. Every man experiences what you call love for every pretty woman."

"Oh, what you say is awful! But the feeling that is called love does exist among people, and is given not for months or years, but for a lifetime!"

"No, it does not! Even if we should grant that a man might prefer a certain woman all his life, the woman in all probability would prefer someone else; and so it always has been and still is in the world," he said, and taking out his cigarette case he began to smoke.

"But the feeling may be reciprocal," said the lawyer.

"No sir, it can't!" rejoined the other. "Just as it cannot be that in a cartload of peas, two marked peas will lie side by side. Besides, it is not merely this impossibility, but the inevitable satiety. To love one person for a whole lifetime is like saying that one candle will burn a whole life," he said, greedily inhaling the smoke.

"But you are talking all the time about physical love. Don't you acknowledge love based on identity of ideals, on spiritual affinity?" asked the lady.

"Spiritual affinity! Identity of ideals!" he repeated, emitting his peculiar sound. "But in that case why go to bed together? (Excuse my coarseness!) Or do people go to bed together because of the identity of their ideals?" he said, bursting into a nervous laugh.

"But permit me," said the lawyer. "Facts contradict you. We do see that matrimony exists, that all mankind, or the greater part of it, lives in wedlock, and many people honourably live long married lives."

The grey-haired man again laughed.

"First you say that marriage is based on love, and when I express a doubt as to the existence of a love other than sensual, you prove the existence of love by the fact that marriages exist. But marriages in our days are mere deception!"

"No, allow me!" said the lawyer. "I only say that marriages have existed and do exist."

"They do! But why? They have existed and do exist among people who see in marriage something sacramental, a mystery binding them in the sight of God. Among them marriages do exist. Among us, people marry regarding marriage as nothing but copulation, and the result is either deception or coercion. When it is deception it is easier to bear. The husband and wife merely deceive people by pretending

to be monogamists, while living polygamously. That is bad, but still bearable. But when, as most frequently happens, the husband and wife have undertaken the external duty of living together all their lives, and begin to hate each other after a month, and wish to part but still continue to live together, it leads to that terrible hell which makes people take to drink, shoot themselves, or kill or poison themselves or one another," he went on, speaking more and more rapidly, not allowing anyone to put in a word and becoming more and more excited. We all felt embarrassed.

"Yes, undoubtedly there are critical episodes in married life," said the lawyer, wishing to end this disturbingly heated conversation.

"I see you have found out who I am!" said the grey-haired man softly, and with apparent calm.

"No, I have not that pleasure."

"It is no great pleasure. I am that Pózdnyshev in whose life that critical episode occurred to which you alluded; the episode when he killed his wife," he said, rapidly glancing at each of us.

No one knew what to say and all remained silent.

"Well, never mind," he said with that peculiar sound of his. "However, pardon me. Ah! … I won't intrude on you."

"Oh, no, if you please …" said the lawyer, himself not knowing "if you please" what.

But Pózdnyshev, without listening to him, rapidly turned away and went back to his seat. The lawyer and the lady whispered together. I sat down beside Pózdnyshev in silence, unable to think of anything to say. It was too dark to read, so I shut my eyes pretending that I wished to go to sleep. So we travelled in silence to the next station.

At that station the lawyer and the lady moved into another car, having some time previously consulted the guard about it. The clerk lay down on the seat and fell asleep. Pózdnyshev kept smoking and drinking tea which he had made at the last station.

When I opened my eyes and looked at him he suddenly addressed me resolutely and irritably:

"Perhaps it is unpleasant for you to sit with me, knowing who I am? In that case I will go away."

"Oh no, not at all."

"Well then, won't you have some? Only it's very strong."

He poured out some tea for me.

"They talk … and they always lie …" he remarked.

"What are you speaking about?" I asked.

"Always about the same thing. About that love of theirs and what

it is! Don't you want to sleep?"

"Not at all."

"Then would you like me to tell you how that love led to what happened to me?"

"Yes, if it will not be painful for you."

"No, it is painful for me to be silent. Drink the tea … or is it too strong?"

The tea was really like beer, but I drank a glass of it.[12] Just then the guard entered. Pózdnyshev followed him with angry eyes, and only began to speak after he had left.

III

"Well then, I'll tell you. But do you really want to hear it?"

I repeated that I wished it very much. He paused, rubbed his face with his hands, and began:

"If I am to tell it, I must tell everything from the beginning: I must tell how and why I married, and the kind of man I was before my marriage.

"Till my marriage I lived as everybody does, that is, everybody in our class. I am a landowner and a graduate of the university, and was a marshal of the gentry. Before my marriage I lived as everyone does, that is, dissolutely; and while living dissolutely I was convinced, like everyone else in our class, that I was living as one has to. I thought I was a charming fellow and quite a moral man. I was not a seducer, had no unnatural tastes, did not make that the chief purpose of my life as many of my associates did, but I practiced debauchery in a steady, decent way for health's sake. I avoided women who might tie my hands by having a child or by attachment for me. However, there may have been children and attachments, but I acted as if there were not. And this I not only considered moral, but I was even proud of it."

He paused and gave vent to his peculiar sound, as he evidently did whenever a new idea occurred to him.

"And you know, that is the chief abomination!" he exclaimed. "Dissoluteness does not lie in anything physical—no kind of physical misconduct is debauchery; real debauchery lies precisely in freeing oneself from moral relations with a woman with whom you have physical intimacy. And such emancipation I regarded as a merit. I remember how

[12] Tea in Russia is usually drunk out of tumblers. —*A. M.*

I once worried because I had not had an opportunity to pay a woman who gave herself to me (having probably taken a fancy to me) and how I only became tranquil after having sent her some money—thereby intimating that I did not consider myself in any way morally bound to her … Don't nod as if you agreed with me," he suddenly shouted at me. "Don't I know these things? We all, and you too unless you are a rare exception, hold those same views, just as I used to. Never mind, I beg your pardon, but the fact is that it's terrible, terrible, terrible!"

"What is terrible?" I asked.

"That abyss of error in which we live regarding women and our relations with them. No, I can't speak calmly about it, not because of that 'episode,' as he called it, in my life, but because since that 'episode' occurred my eyes have been opened and I have seen everything in quite a different light. Everything reversed, everything reversed!"

He lit a cigarette and began to speak, leaning his elbows on his knees.

It was too dark to see his face, but, above the jolting of the train, I could hear his impressive and pleasant voice.

IV

"Yes, only after such torments as I have endured, only by their means, have I understood where the root of the matter lies—understood what ought to be, and therefore seen all the horror of what is.

"So you will see how and when that which led up to my 'episode' began. It began when I was not quite sixteen. It happened when I still went to the grammar school and my elder brother was a first-year student at the university. I had not yet known any woman, but, like all the unfortunate children of our class, I was no longer an innocent boy. I had been depraved two years before that by other boys. Already woman, not some particular woman but woman as something to be desired, woman, every woman, woman's nudity, tormented me. My solitude was not pure. I was tormented, as ninety-nine percent of our boys are. I was horrified, I suffered, I prayed, and I fell. I was already depraved in imagination and in fact, but I had not yet laid hands on another human being. But one day a comrade of my brother's, a jolly student, a so-called good fellow, that is, the worst kind of good-for-nothing, who had taught us to drink and to play cards, persuaded us after a carousal to go *there*. We went. My brother was also still innocent, and he fell that same night. And I, a fifteen-year-old boy, defiled

myself and took part in defiling a woman, without at all understanding what I was doing. I had never heard from any of my elders that what I was doing was wrong, you know. And indeed no one hears it now. It is true it is in the Commandments but then the Commandments are only needed to answer the priest at Scripture examination, and even then they are not very necessary, not nearly as necessary as the commandment about the use of *ut* in conditional sentences in Latin.

"And so I never heard those older persons whose opinions I respected say that it was an evil. On the contrary, I heard people I respected say it was good. I had heard that my struggles and sufferings would be eased after that. I heard this and read it, and heard my elders say it would be good for my health, while from my comrades I heard that it was rather a fine, spirited thing to do. So in general I expected nothing but good from it. The risk of disease? But that too had been foreseen. A paternal government saw to that. It sees to the correct working of brothels,[13] and makes profligacy safe for schoolboys. Doctors too deal with it for a consideration. That is proper. They assert that debauchery is good for the health, and they organize proper well-regulated debauchery. I know some mothers who attend to their sons' health in that sense. And science sends them to the brothels."

"Why do you say 'science'?" I asked.

"Why, who are the doctors? The priests of science. Who deprave youths by maintaining that this is necessary for their health? They do.

"Yet if a one-hundredth part of the efforts devoted to the cure of syphilis were devoted to the eradication of debauchery there would long ago not have been a trace of syphilis left. But as it is, efforts are made not to eradicate debauchery but to encourage it and to make debauchery safe. That is not the point however. The point is that with me—and with nine-tenths, if not more, not of our class only but of all classes, even the peasants—this terrible thing happens that happened to me; I fell not because I succumbed to the natural temptation of a particular woman's charm—no, I was not seduced by a woman—but I fell because, in the set around me, what was really a fall was regarded by some as a most legitimate function good for one's health, and by others as a very natural and not only excusable but even innocent amusement for a young man. I did not understand that it was a fall,

[13] In Russia, as in other continental countries and formerly in England, the *maisons de tolérance* were under the supervision of the government; doctors were employed to examine the women, and, as far as possible, see they did not continue the trade when diseased. —*A. M.*

but simply indulged in that half-pleasure, half-need, which, as was suggested to me, was natural at a certain age. I began to indulge in debauchery as I began to drink and to smoke. Yet in that first fall there was something special and pathetic. I remember that at once, on the spot before I left the room, I felt sad, so sad that I wanted to cry—to cry for the loss of my innocence and for my relationship with women, now sullied forever. Yes, my natural, simple relationship with women was spoilt forever. From that time I have not had, and could not have, pure relations with women. I had become what is called a libertine. To be a libertine is a physical condition like that of a morphinist, a drunkard, or a smoker. As a morphinist, a drunkard, or a smoker is no longer normal, so too a man who has known several women for his pleasure is not normal but is a man perverted forever, a libertine. As a drunkard or a morphinist can be recognized at once by his face and manner, so it is with a libertine. A libertine may restrain himself, may struggle, but he will never have those pure, simple, clear, brotherly relations with a woman. By the way he looks at a young woman and examines, a libertine can always be recognized. And I had become and I remained a libertine, and it was this that brought me to ruin."

V

"Ah, yes! After that things went from bad to worse, and there were all sorts of deviations. Oh, God! When I recall the abominations I committed in this respect I am seized with horror! And that is true of me, whom my companions, I remember, ridiculed for my so-called innocence. And when one hears of the 'gilded youths,' of officers, of the Parisians … ! And when all these gentlemen, and I—who have on our souls hundreds of the most varied and horrible crimes against women—when we thirty-year-old profligates, very carefully washed, shaved, perfumed, in clean linen and in evening dress or uniform, enter a drawing room or ballroom, we are emblems of purity, charming!

"Only think of what ought to be, and of what is! When in society such a gentleman comes up to my sister or daughter, I, knowing his life, ought to go up to him, take him aside, and say quietly, 'My dear fellow, I know the life you lead, and how and with whom you pass your nights. This is no place for you. There are pure, innocent girls here. Be off!' that is what ought to be; but what happens is that when such a gentleman comes and dances, embracing our sister or daughter, we are

jubilant, if he is rich and well-connected. Maybe after Rigulboche[14] he will honor my daughter! Even if traces of disease remain, no matter! They are clever at curing that nowadays. Oh, yes, I know several girls in the best society whom their parents enthusiastically gave in marriage to men suffering from a certain disease. Oh, oh … the abomination of it! But a time will come when this abomination and falsehood will be exposed!"

He made his strange noise several times and again drank tea. It was fearfully strong and there was no water with which to dilute it. I felt that I was much excited by the two glasses I had drunk.

Probably the tea affected him too, for he became more and more excited. His voice grew increasingly mellow and expressive. He continually changed his position, now taking off his cap and now putting it on again, and his face changed strangely in the semidarkness in which we were sitting.

"Well, so I lived till I was thirty, not abandoning for a moment the intention of marrying and arranging for myself a most elevated and pure family life. With that purpose I observed the girls suitable for that end," he continued. "I weltered in a mire of debauchery and at the same time was on the lookout for a girl pure enough to be worthy of me.

"I rejected many just because they were not pure enough to suit me, but at last I found one whom I considered worthy. She was one of two daughters of a once wealthy Pénza landowner who had been ruined.

"One evening after we had been out in a boat and had returned by moonlight, and I was sitting beside her admiring her curls and her shapely figure in a tight-fitting jersey, I suddenly decided that it was she! It seemed to me that evening that she understood all that I felt and thought, and that what I felt and thought was very lofty. In reality it was only that the jersey and the curls were particularly becoming to her and that after a day spent near her I wanted to be still closer.

"It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness. A handsome woman talks nonsense, you listen and hear not nonsense but cleverness. She says and does horrid things, and you see only charm. And if a handsome woman does not say stupid or horrid things, you at once persuade yourself that she is wonderfully clever and moral.

"I returned home in rapture, decided that she was the acme of moral perfection, and that therefore she was worthy to be my wife,

[14] A notorious Parisian *cancanière*. —*A. M.*

and I proposed to her next day.

"What a muddle it is! Out of a thousand men who marry (not only among us but unfortunately also among the masses) there is hardly one who has not already been married ten, a hundred, or even, like Don Juan, a thousand times, before his wedding.

"It is true as I have heard and have myself observed that there are nowadays some chaste young men who feel and know that this thing is not a joke but an important matter.

"God help them! But in my time there was not one such in ten thousand. And everybody knows this and pretends not to know it. In all the novels they describe in detail the heroes' feelings and the ponds and bushes beside which they walk, but when their great love for some maiden is described, nothing is said about what has happened to these interesting heroes before: not a word about their frequenting certain houses, or about the servant girls, cooks, and other people's wives! If there are such improper novels they are not put into the hands of those who most need this information—the unmarried girls.

"We first pretend to these girls that the profligacy which fills half the life of our towns, and even of the villages, does not exist at all.

"Then we get so accustomed to this pretence that at last, like the English, we ourselves really begin to believe this quite seriously. So too did my unfortunate wife. I remember how, when we were engaged, I showed her my diary, from which she could learn something, if but a little, of my past, especially about my last liaison, of which she might hear from others, and about which I therefore felt it necessary to inform her. I remember her horror, despair, and confusion, when she learnt of it and understood it. I saw that she then wanted to give me up. And why did she not do so? …"

He again made that sound, swallowed another mouthful of tea, and remained silent for a while.

VI

"No, after all, it is better, better so!" he exclaimed. "It serves me right! But that's not to the point—I meant to say that it is only the unfortunate girls who are deceived.

"The mothers know it, especially mothers educated by their own husbands—they know it very well. While pretending to believe in the purity of men, they act quite differently. They know with what sort of bait to catch men for themselves and for their daughters.

"You see it is only we men who don't know (because we don't wish to know) what women know very well, that the most exalted poetic love, as we call it, depends not on moral qualities but on physical nearness and on the coiffure, and the colour and cut of the dress. Ask an expert coquette who has set herself the task of captivating a man, which she would prefer to risk: to be convicted in his presence of lying, of cruelty, or even of dissoluteness, or to appear before him in an ugly and badly made dress—she will always prefer the first. She knows that we are continually lying about high sentiments, but really only want her body and will therefore forgive any abomination except an ugly tasteless costume that is in bad style.

"A coquette knows that consciously, and every innocent girl knows it unconsciously just as animals do.

"That is why there are those detestable jerseys, bustles, and naked shoulders, arms, almost breasts. A woman, especially if she has passed the male school, knows very well that all the talk about elevated subjects is just talk, but that what a man wants is her body and all that presents it in the most deceptive but alluring light; and she acts accordingly. If we only throw aside our familiarity with this indecency, which has become a second nature to us, and look at the life of our upper classes as it is, in all its shamelessness—why, it is simply a brothel … You don't agree? Allow me, I'll prove it," he said, interrupting me. "You say that the women of our society have other interests in life than prostitutes have, but I say no, and will prove it. If people differ in the aims of their lives, by the inner content of their lives, this difference will necessarily be reflected in externals and their externals will be different. But look at those unfortunate despised women and at the highest society ladies: the same costumes, the same fashions, the same perfumes, the exposure of arms, shoulders, and breasts, the same tight skirts over prominent bustles, the same passion for little stones, for costly, glittering objects, the same amusements, dances, music, and singing. As the former employ all means to allure, so do these others."

VII

"Well, so these jerseys and curls and bustles caught me!

"It was very easy to catch me for I was brought up in the conditions in which amorous young people are forced like cucumbers in a hotbed. You see our stimulating superabundance of food, together with complete physical idleness, is nothing but a systematic excitement of desire.

Whether this astonishes you or not, it is so. Why, till quiet recently I did not see anything of this myself, but now I have seen it. That is why it torments me that nobody knows this, and people talk such nonsense as that lady did.

"Yes, last spring some peasants were working in our neighborhood on a railway embankment. The usual food of a young peasant is rye bread, kvass, and onions; he keeps alive and is vigorous and healthy; his work is light agricultural work. When he goes to railway work his rations are buckwheat porridge and a pound of meat a day. But he works off that pound of meat during his sixteen hours' work wheeling barrow-loads of half-a-ton weight, so it is just enough for him. But we who every day consume two pounds of meat, and game, and fish and all sorts of heating foods and drinks—where does that go to? Into excesses of sensuality. And if it goes there and the safety valve is open, all is well; but try and close the safety valve, as I closed it temporarily, and at once a stimulus arises which, passing through the prism of our artificial life, expresses itself in utter infatuation, sometimes even platonic. And I fell in love as they all do.

"Everything was there to hand: raptures, tenderness, and poetry. In reality that love of mine was the result, on the one hand of her mamma's and the dressmakers' activity, and on the other of the superabundance of food consumed by me while living an idle life. If on the one hand there had been no boating, no dressmaker with her waists and so forth, and had my wife been sitting at home in a shapeless dressing gown, and had I on the other hand been in circumstances normal to man—consuming just enough food to suffice for the work I did, and had the safety valve been open—it happened to be closed at the time—I should not have fallen in love and nothing of all this would have happened."

VIII

"Well, and now it so chanced that everything combined—my condition, her becoming dress, and the satisfactory boating. It had failed twenty times but now it succeeded. Just like a trap! I am not joking. You see nowadays marriages are arranged that way—like traps. What is the natural way? The lass is ripe, she must be given in marriage. It seems very simple if the girl is not a fright and there are men wanting to marry. That is how it was done in olden times. The lass was grown up and her parents arranged the marriage. So it was done, and is done,

among all mankind—Chinese, Hindus, Mohammedans, and among our own working classes; so it is done among at least ninety-nine percent of the human race. Only among one percent or less, among us libertines, has it been discovered that that is not right, and something new has been invented. And what is this novelty? It is that the maidens sit around and the men walk about, as at a bazaar, choosing. And the maidens wait and think, but dare not say: 'Me, please!' 'No, me!' 'Not her, but me!' 'Look what shoulders and other things I have!' And we men stroll around and look, and are very pleased. 'Yes, I know! I won't be caught!' They stroll about and look and are very pleased that everything is arranged like that for them. And then in an unguarded moment—snap! He is caught!"

"Then how ought it to be done?" I asked. "Should the woman propose?"

"Oh, I don't know how; only if there's to be equality, let it be equality. If they have discovered that prearranged matches are degrading, why this is a thousand times worse! Then the rights and chances were equal, but here the woman is a slave in a bazaar or the bait in a trap. Tell any mother, or the girl herself, the truth, that she is only occupied in catching a husband … oh dear! what an insult! Yet they all do it and have nothing else to do. What is so terrible is to see sometimes quite innocent poor young girls engaged on it. And again, if it were but done openly—but it is always done deceitfully. 'Ah, the origin of species, how interesting!' 'Oh, Lily takes such an interest in painting! And will you be going to the exhibition? How instructive!' And the troika drives, and shows, and symphonies! 'Oh! how remarkable! My Lily is mad on music.' 'And why don't you share these convictions?' and boating … but their one thought is: 'take me, take me!' 'take my Lily!' 'Or try—at least!' Oh, what an abomination! What falsehood!' he concluded, finishing his tea and beginning to put away the tea things.

IX

"You know," he began while packing the tea and sugar into his bag. "The domination of women from which the world suffers all arises from this."

"What 'domination of women'?" I asked. "The rights, the legal privileges, are on the man's side."

"Yes, yes! That's just it," he interrupted me. "That's just what I want to say. It explains the extraordinary phenomenon that on the one

hand woman is reduced to the lowest stage of humiliation, while on the other she dominates. Just like the Jews: as they pay us back for their oppression by a financial domination, so it is with women. 'Ah, you want us to be traders only—all right, as traders we will dominate you!' say the Jews. 'Ah, you want us to be merely objects of sensuality—all right, as objects of sensuality we will enslave you,' say the women. Woman's lack of rights arises not from the fact that she must not vote or be a judge—to be occupied with such affairs is no privilege—but from the fact that she is not man's equal in sexual intercourse and has not the right to use a man or abstain from him as she likes—is not allowed to choose a man at her pleasure instead of being chosen by him. You say that is monstrous. Very well! Then a man must not have those rights either. As it is at present, a woman is deprived of that right while a man has it. And to make up for that right she acts on man's sensuality, and through his sensuality subdues him so that he only chooses formally, while in reality it is she who chooses. And once she has obtained these means she abuses them and acquires a terrible power over people."

"But where is this special power?" I inquired.

"Where is it? Why everywhere, in everything! Go round the shops in any big town. There are goods worth millions and you cannot estimate the human labour expended on them, and look whether in nine-tenths of these shops there is anything for the use of men. All the luxuries of life are demanded and maintained by women.

"Count all the factories. An enormous proportion of them produce useless ornaments, carriages, furniture, and trinkets, for women. Millions of people, generations of slaves, perish at hard labour in factories merely to satisfy woman's caprice. Women, like queens, keep nine-tenths of mankind in bondage to heavy labour. And all because they have been abased and deprived of equal rights with men. And they revenge themselves by acting on our sensuality and catch us in their nets. Yes, it all comes of that.

"Women have made of themselves such an instrument for acting upon our sensuality that a man cannot quietly consort with a woman. As soon as a man approaches a woman he succumbs to her stupefying influence and becomes intoxicated and crazy. I used formerly to feel uncomfortable and uneasy when I saw a lady dressed up for a ball, but now I am simply frightened and plainly see her as something dangerous and illicit. I want to call a policeman and ask for protection from the peril, and demand that the dangerous object be removed and put away.

"Ah, you are laughing!" he shouted at me, "but it is not at all

a joke. I am sure a time will come, and perhaps very soon, when people will understand this and will wonder how a society could exist in which actions were permitted which so disturb social tranquillity as those adornments of the body directly evoking sensuality, which we tolerate for women in our society. Why, it's like setting all sorts of traps along the paths and promenades—it is even worse! Why is gambling forbidden while women in costumes which evoke sensuality are not forbidden? They are a thousand times more dangerous!"

X

"Well, you see, I was caught that way. I was what is called in love. I not only imagined her to be the height of perfection, but during the time of our engagement I regarded myself also as the height of perfection. You know there is no rascal who cannot, if he tries, find rascals in some respects worse than himself, and who consequently cannot find reasons for pride and self-satisfaction. So it was with me: I was not marrying for money—covetousness had nothing to do with it—unlike the majority of my acquaintances who married for money or connections—I was rich, she was poor. That was one thing. Another thing I prided myself on was that while others married intending to continue in future the same polygamous life they had lived before marriage, I was firmly resolved to be monogamous after marriage, and there was no limit to my pride on that score. Yes, I was a dreadful pig and imagined myself to be an angel.

"Our engagement did not last long. I cannot now think of that time without shame! What nastiness! Love is supposed to be spiritual and not sensual. Well, if the love is spiritual, a spiritual communion, then that spiritual communion should find expression in words, in conversations, in discourse. There was nothing of the kind. It used to be dreadfully difficult to talk when we were left alone. It was the labour of Sisyphus. As soon as we thought of something to say and said it, we had again to be silent, devising something else. There was nothing to talk about. All that could be said about the life that awaited us, our arrangements and plans, had been said, and what was there more? Now if we had been animals we should have known that speech was unnecessary; but here on the contrary it was necessary to speak, and there was nothing to say, because we were not occupied with what finds vent in speech. And moreover there was that ridiculous custom of giving sweets, of coarse gormandizing on sweets, and all those abom-

inable preparations for the wedding: remarks about the house, the bedroom, beds, wraps, dressing gowns, underclothing, costumes. You must remember that if one married according to the injunctions of *Domostróy*, as that old fellow was saying, then the feather beds, the trousseau, and the bedstead are all but details appropriate to the sacrament. But among us, when of ten who marry there are certainly nine who not only do not believe in the sacrament, but do not even believe that what they are doing entails certain obligations—where scarcely one man out of a hundred has not been married before, and of fifty scarcely one is not preparing in advance to be unfaithful to his wife at every convenient opportunity—when the majority regard the going to church as only a special condition for obtaining possession of a certain woman—think what a dreadful significance all these details acquire. They show that the whole business is only that; they show that it is a kind of sale. An innocent girl is sold to a profligate, and the sale is accompanied by certain formalities."

XI

"That is how everybody marries and that is how I married, and the much vaunted honeymoon began. Why, its very name is vile!" he hissed viciously. "In Paris I once went to see the sights, and noticing a bearded woman and a water-dog on a sign board, I entered the show. It turned out to be nothing but a man in a woman's low-necked dress, and a dog done up in a walrus skin and swimming in a bath. It was very far from being interesting; but as I was leaving, the showman politely saw me out and, addressing the public at the entrance, pointed to me and said, 'Ask the gentleman whether it is not worth seeing! Come in, come in, one franc apiece!' I felt ashamed to say it was not worth seeing, and the showman had probably counted on that. It must be the same with those who have experienced the abomination of a honeymoon and who do not disillusion others. Neither did I disillusion anyone, but I do not now see why I should not tell the truth. Indeed, I think it needful to tell the truth about it. One felt awkward, ashamed, repelled, sorry, and above all dull, intolerably dull! It was something like what I felt when I learned to smoke—when I felt sick and the saliva gathered in my mouth and I swallowed it and pretended that it was very pleasant. Pleasure from smoking, just as from that, if it comes at all, comes later. The husband must cultivate that vice in his wife in order to derive pleasure from it."

"Why vice?" I said. "You are speaking of the most natural human functions."

"Natural?" he said. "Natural? No, I may tell you that I have come to the conclusion that it is, on the contrary, *un*natural. Yes, quite *un*natural. As a child, as an unperverted girl.

"Natural, you say!

"It is natural to eat. And to eat is, from the very beginning enjoyable, easy, pleasant, and not shameful; but this is horrid, shameful, and painful. No, it is unnatural! And an unspoiled girl, as I have convinced myself, always hates it."

"But how," I asked, "would the human race continue?"

"Yes, would not the human race perish?" he said, irritably and ironically, as if he had expected this familiar and insincere objection. "Teach abstention from childbearing so that English lords may always gorge themselves—that is all right. Preach it for the sake of greater pleasure—that is all right; but just hint at abstention from childbearing in the name of morality—and, my goodness, what a rumpus … ! Isn't there a danger that the human race may die out because they want to cease to be swine? But forgive me! This light is unpleasant, may I shade it?" he said, pointing to the lamp. I said I did not mind; and with the haste with which he did everything, he got up on the seat and drew the woollen shade over the lamp.

"All the same," I said, "if everyone thought this the right thing to do, the human race would cease to exist."

He did not reply at once.

"You ask how the human race will continue to exist," he said, having again sat down in front of me, and spreading his legs far apart he leant his elbows on his knees. "Why should it continue?"

"Why? If not, we should not exist."

"And why should we exist?"

"Why? In order to live, of course."

"But why live? If life has no aim, if life is given us for life's sake, there is no reason for living. And if it is so, then the Schopenhauers, the Hartmanns, and all the Buddhists as well, are quite right. But if life has an aim, it is clear that it ought to come to an end when that aim is reached. And so it turns out," he said with a noticeable agitation, evidently prizing his thought very highly. "So it turns out. Just think: if the aim of humanity is goodness, righteousness, love—call it what you will—if it is what the prophets have said, that all mankind should be united together in love, that the spears should be beaten into pruning hooks and so forth, what is it that hinders the

attainment of this aim? The passions hinder it. Of all the passions the strongest, cruellest, and most stubborn is the sex passion, physical love; and therefore if the passions are destroyed, including the strongest of them—physical love—the prophecies will be fulfilled, mankind will be brought into a unity, the aim of human existence will be attained, and there will be nothing further to live for. As long as mankind exists the ideal is before it, and of course not the rabbits' and pigs' ideal of breeding as fast as possible, nor that of monkeys or Parisians—to enjoy sex passion in the most refined manner, but the ideal of goodness attained by continence and purity. Towards that people have always striven and still strive. You see what follows.

"It follows that physical love is a safety valve. If the present generation has not attained its aim, it has not done so because of its passions, of which the sex passion is the strongest. And if the sex passion endures there will be a new generation and consequently the possibility of attaining the aim in the next generation. If the next one does not attain it, then the next after that may, and so on, till the aim is attained, the prophecies fulfilled, and mankind attains unity. If not, what would result? If one admits that God created men for the attainment of a certain aim, and created them mortal but sexless, or created them immortal, what would be the result? Why, if they were mortal but without the sex passion, and died without attaining the aim, God would have had to create new people to attain his aim. If they were immortal, let us grant that (though it would be more difficult for the same people to correct their mistakes and approach perfection than for those of another generation) they might attain that aim after many thousands of years, but then what use would they be afterwards? What could be done with them? It is best as it is. … But perhaps you don't like that way of putting it? Perhaps you are an evolutionist? It comes to the same thing. The highest race of animals, the human race, in order to maintain itself in the struggle with other animals ought to unite into one whole like a swarm of bees, and not breed continually; it should bring up sexless members as the bees do; that is, again, it should strive towards continence and not towards inflaming desire—to which the whole system of our life is now directed." He paused. "The human race will cease? But can anyone doubt it, whatever his outlook on life may be? Why, it is as certain as death. According to all the teaching of the Church the end of the world will come, and according to all the teaching of science the same result is inevitable."

XII

"In our world it is just the reverse: even if a man does think of continence while he is a bachelor, once married he is sure to think continence no longer necessary. You know those wedding tours—the seclusion into which, with their parents' consent, the young couple go—are nothing but licensed debauchery. But a moral law avenges itself when it is violated. Hard as I tried to make a success of my honeymoon, nothing came of it. It was horrid, shameful, and dull, the whole time. And very soon I began also to experience a painful, oppressive feeling. That began very quickly. I think it was on the third or fourth day that I found my wife depressed. I began asking her the reason and embracing her, which in my view was all she could want, but she removed my arm and began to cry. What about? She could not say. But she felt sad and distressed. Probably her exhausted nerves suggested to her the truth as to the vileness of our relation but she did not know how to express it. I began to question her, and she said something about feeling sad without her mother. It seemed to me that this was untrue, and I began comforting her without alluding to her mother. I did not understand that she was simply depressed and her mother was merely an excuse. But she immediately took offence because I had not mentioned her mother, as though I did not believe her. She told me she saw that I did not love her. I reproached her with being capricious, and suddenly her face changed entirely and instead of sadness it expressed irritation, and with the most venomous words she began accusing me of selfishness and cruelty. I gazed at her. Her whole face showed complete coldness and hostility, almost hatred. I remember how horror-struck I was when I saw this. 'How? What?' I thought. 'Love is a union of souls—and instead of that there is this! Impossible, this is not she!' I tried to soften her, but encountered such an insuperable wall of cold virulent hostility that before I had time to turn round I too was seized with irritation and we said a great many unpleasant things to one another. The impression of that first quarrel was dreadful. I call it a quarrel, but it was not a quarrel but only the disclosure of the abyss that really existed between us. Amorousness was exhausted by the satisfaction of sensuality and we were left confronting one another in our true relation: that is, as two egotists quite alien to each other who wished to get as much pleasure as possible each from the other. I call what took place between us a quarrel, only the consequence of the cessation of sensuality—revealing our real relations to one another. I did not understand that this cold and hostile relation was our normal

state, I did not understand it because at first this hostile attitude was very soon concealed from us by a renewal of redistilled sensuality, that is by lovemaking.

"I thought we had quarrelled and made it up again, and that it would not recur. But during that same first month of honeymoon a period of satiety soon returned, we again ceased to need one another, and another quarrel supervened. This second quarrel struck me even more painfully than the first. 'So the first one was not an accident but was bound to happen and will happen again,' I thought. I was all the more staggered by that second quarrel because it arose from such an impossible pretext. It had something to do with money, which I never grudged and could certainly not have grudged to my wife. I only remember that she gave the matter such a twist that some remark of mine appeared to be an expression of a desire on my part to dominate over her by means of money, to which I was supposed to assert an exclusive right—it was something impossibly stupid, mean, and not natural either to me or to her. I became exasperated, and upbraided her with lack of consideration for me. She accused me of the same thing, and it all began again. In her words and in the expression of her face and eyes I again noticed the cruel cold hostility that had so staggered me before. I had formerly quarrelled with my brother, my friends, and my father, but there had never, I remember, been the special venomous malice which there was here. But after a while this mutual hatred was screened by amorousness, that is sensuality, and I still consoled myself with the thought that these two quarrels had been mistakes and could be remedied. But then a third and a fourth quarrel followed and I realized that it was not accidental, but that it was bound to happen and would happen so, and I was horrified at the prospect before me. At the same time I was tormented by the terrible thought that I alone lived on such bad terms with my wife, so unlike what I had expected, whereas this did not happen between other married couples. I did not know then that it is our common fate, but that everybody imagines, just as I did, that is their peculiar misfortune, and everyone conceals this exceptional and shameful misfortune not only from others but even from himself and does not acknowledge it to himself.

"It began during the first days and continued all the time, ever increasing and growing more obdurate. In the depths of my soul I felt from the first weeks that I was lost, that things had not turned out as I expected, that marriage was not only no happiness but a very heavy burden; but like everybody else I did not wish to acknowledge this to myself (I should not have acknowledged it even now but for the

end that followed) and I concealed it not only from others but from myself too. Now I am astonished that I failed to see my real position. It might have been seen from the fact that the quarrels began on pretexts it was impossible to remember when they were over. Our reason was not quick enough to *devise* sufficient excuses for the animosity that always existed between us. But more striking still was the insufficiency of the excuses for our reconciliations. Sometimes there were words, explanations, even tears, but sometimes … oh! it is disgusting even now to think of it—after the most cruel words to one another, came sudden silent glances, smiles, kisses, embraces. … Faugh, how horrid! How is it I did not then see all the vileness of it?"

XIII

Two fresh passengers entered and settled down on the farthest seats. He was silent while they were seating themselves, but as soon as they had settled down continued, evidently not for a moment losing the thread of his idea.

"You know, what is vilest about it," he began, "is that in theory love is something ideal and exalted, but in practice it is something abominable, swinish, which it is horrid and shameful to mention or remember. It is not for nothing that nature has made it disgusting and shameful. And if it is disgusting and shameful one must understand that it is so. But here, on the contrary, people pretend that what is disgusting and shameful is beautiful and lofty. What were the first symptoms of my love? Why, that I gave way to animal excesses, not only without shame but being somehow even proud of the possibility of these physical excesses, and without in the least considering either her spiritual or even her physical life. I wondered what embittered us against one another, yet it was perfectly simple: that animosity was nothing but the protest of our human nature against the animal nature that overpowered it.

"I was surprised at our enmity to one another; yet it could not have been otherwise. That hatred was nothing but the mutual hatred of accomplices in a crime—both for the incitement to the crime and for the part taken in it. What was it but a crime when she, poor thing, became pregnant in the first month and our *swinish* connection continued? You think I am straying from my subject? Not at all! I am telling you *how* I killed my wife. They asked me at the trial with what and how I killed her. Fools! They thought I killed her with a

knife, on the 5th of October. It was not then I killed her, but much earlier. Just as they are all now killing, all, all. …"

"But with what?" I asked.

"That is just what is so surprising, that nobody wants to see what is so clear and evident, what doctors ought to know and preach, but are silent about. Yet the matter is very simple. Men and women are created like the animals so that physical love is followed by pregnancy and then by suckling—conditions under which physical love is bad for the woman and for her child. There are an equal number of men and women. What follows from this? It seems clear, and no great wisdom is needed to draw the conclusion that animals do, namely, the need of continence. But no. Science has been able to discover some kind of leukocytes that run about in the blood, and all sorts of useless nonsense, but cannot understand that. At least one does not hear of science teaching it!

"And so a woman has only two ways out: one is to make a monster of herself, to destroy and go on destroying within herself to such a degree as may be necessary the capacity of being a woman, that is, a mother, in order that a man may quietly and continuously get his enjoyment; the other way out—and it is not even a way out but a simple, coarse, and direct violation of the laws of nature—practiced in all so-called decent families—is that, contrary to her nature, the woman must be her husband's mistress even while she is pregnant or nursing—must be what not even an animal descends to, and for which her strength is insufficient. That is what causes nerve troubles and hysteria in our class, and among the peasants causes what they call being 'possessed by the devil'—epilepsy. You will notice that no pure maidens are ever 'possessed,' but only married women living with their husbands. That is so here, and it is just the same in Europe. All the hospitals for hysterical women are full of those who have violated nature's law. The epileptics and Charcot's patients are complete wrecks, you know, but the world is full of half-crippled women. Just think of it, what a great work goes on within a woman when she conceives or when she is nursing an infant. That is growing which will continue us and replace us. And this sacred work is violated—by what? It is terrible to think of it! And they prate about the freedom and the rights of women! It is as if cannibals fattened their captives to be eaten, and at the same time declared that they were concerned about their prisoners' rights and freedom."

All this was new to me and startled me.

"What is one to do? If that is so," I said, "it means that one may

love one's wife once in two years, yet men …"

"Men must!" he interrupted me. "It is again those precious priests of science who have persuaded everybody of that. Imbue a man with the idea that he requires vodka, tobacco, or opium, and all these things will be indispensable to him. It seems that God did not understand what was necessary and therefore, omitting to consult those wizards, arranged things badly. You see matters do not tally. They have decided that it is essential for a man to satisfy his desires, and the bearing and nursing of children comes and interferes with it and hinders the satisfaction of that need. What is one to do then? Consult the wizards! They will arrange it. And they have devised something. Oh! when will those wizards with their deceptions be dethroned? It is high time. It has come to such a point that people go mad and shoot themselves and all because of this. How could it be otherwise? The animals seem to know that their progeny continue their race, and they keep it to a certain law in this matter. Man alone neither knows it nor wishes to know, but is concerned only to get all the pleasure he can. And who is doing that? The lord of nature—man! Animals, you see, only come together at times when they are capable of producing progeny, but the filthy lord of nature is at it any time if only it pleases him! And as if that were not sufficient, he exalts this apish occupation into the most precious pearl of creation, into love. In the name of this love, that is, this filth, he destroys—what? why, half the human race! All the women who might help the progress of mankind towards truth and goodness he converts, for the sake of his pleasure, into enemies instead of helpmates. See what it is that everywhere impedes the forward movement of mankind. Women! and why are they what they are? Only because of that. Yes, yes …" he repeated several times, and began to move about, and to get out his cigarettes and to smoke, evidently trying to calm himself.

XIV

"I too lived like a pig of that sort," he continued in his former tone. "The worst thing about it was that while living that horrid life I imagined that, because I did not go after other women, I was living an honest family life, that I was a moral man and in no way blameworthy, and if quarrels occurred it was her fault and resulted from her character.

"Of course the fault was not hers. She was like everybody else—

like the majority of women. She had been brought up as the position of women in our society requires, and as therefore all women of the leisured classes without exception are brought up and cannot help being brought up. People talk about some new kind of education for women. It is all empty words: their education is exactly what it has to be in view of our unfeigned, real, general opinion about women.

"The education of women will always correspond to men's opinion about them. Don't we know how men regard women: *Wein, Weib und Gesang*, and what the poets say in their verses? Take all poetry, all pictures and sculpture, beginning with love poems and the nude Venuses and Phrynes, and you will see that woman is an instrument of enjoyment; she is so on the Trubá and the Grachévka,[15] and also at the Court[16] balls. And note the devil's cunning: if they are here for enjoyment and pleasure, let it be known that it is pleasure and that woman is a sweet morsel. But no, first the knights-errant declare that they worship women (worship her, and yet regard her as an instrument of enjoyment), and now people assure us that they respect women. Some give up their places to her, pick up her handkerchief; others acknowledge her right to occupy all positions and to take part in the government, and so on. They do all that, but their outlook on her remains the same. She is a means of enjoyment. Her body is a means of enjoyment. And she knows this. It is just as it is with slavery. Slavery, you know, is nothing else than the exploitation by some of the unwilling labour of many. Therefore to get rid of slavery it is necessary that people should not wish to profit by the forced labour of others and should consider it a sin and a shame. But they go and abolish the external form of slavery and arrange so that one can no longer buy and sell slaves, and they imagine and assure themselves that slavery no longer exists, and do not see or wish to see that it does, because people still want and consider it good and right to exploit the labour of others. And as long as they consider that good, there will always be people stronger or more cunning than others who will succeed in doing it. So it is with the emancipation of woman: the enslavement of woman lies simply in the fact that people desire and think it good, to avail themselves of her as a tool of enjoyment. Well, and they liberate woman, give her all sorts of rights equal to man, but continue to regard her as an instrument of enjoyment, and so educate her in

[15] Streets in Moscow in which brothels were numerous. —*A. M.*

[16] In the printed and censored Russian edition the word "Court" was changed to "most refined." —*A. M.*

childhood and afterwards by public opinion. And there she is, still the same humiliated and depraved slave, and the man still a depraved slave owner.

"They emancipate women in universities and in law courts, but continue to regard her as an object of enjoyment. Teach her, as she is taught among us, to regard herself as such, and she will always remain an inferior being. Either with the help of those scoundrels the doctors she will prevent the conception of offspring—that is, will be a complete prostitute, lowering herself not to the level of an animal but to the level of a thing—or she will be what the majority of women are, mentally diseased, hysterical, unhappy, and lacking capacity for spiritual development. High schools and universities cannot alter that. It can only be changed by a change in men's outlook on women and women's way of regarding themselves. It will change only when woman regards virginity as the highest state, and does not, as at present, consider the highest state of a human being a shame and a disgrace. While that is not so, the ideal of every girl, whatever her education may be, will continue to be to attract as many men as possible, as many males as possible, so as to have the possibility of choosing.

"But the fact that one of them knows more mathematics, and another can play the harp, makes no difference. A woman is happy and attains all she can desire when she has bewitched a man. Therefore the chief aim of a woman is to be able to bewitch him. So it has been and will be. So it is in her maiden life in our society, and so it continues to be in her married life. For a maiden this is necessary in order to have a choice, for the married woman in order to have power over her husband.

"The one thing that stops this or at any rate suppresses it for a time, is children, and then only if the mother is not a monster, that is, if she nurses them herself. But here the doctors again come in.

"My wife, who wanted to nurse, and did nurse the four later children herself, happened to be unwell after the birth of her first child. And those doctors, who cynically undressed her and felt her all over—for which I had to thank them and pay them money—those dear doctors considered that she must not nurse the child; and that first time she was deprived of the only means which might have kept her from coquetry. We engaged a wet nurse, that is, we took advantage of the poverty, the need, and the ignorance of a woman, tempted her away from her own baby to ours, and in return gave her a fine headdress with gold lace.[17]

[17]In Russia wet-nurses were usually provided with an elaborate national costume

But that is not the point. The point is that during that time when my wife was free from pregnancy and suckling, the feminine coquetry which had lain dormant within her manifested itself with particular force. And coinciding with this the torments of jealousy rose up in me with a special force. They tortured me all my married life, as they cannot but torture all husbands who live with their wives and I did with mine, that is, immorally."

XV

"During the whole of my married life I never ceased to be tormented by jealousy, but there were periods when I specially suffered from it. One of these periods was when, after the birth of our first child, the doctors forbade my wife to nurse it. I was particularly jealous at that time, in the first place because my wife was experiencing that unrest natural to a mother which is sure to be aroused when the natural course of life is needlessly violated; and secondly, because seeing how easily she abandoned her moral obligations as a mother, I rightly though unconsciously concluded that it would be equally easy for her to disregard her duty as a wife, especially as she was quite well and in spite of the precious doctors' prohibition was able to nurse her later children admirably."

"I see you don't like doctors," I said, noticing a peculiarly malevolent tone in his voice whenever he alluded to them.

"It is not a case of liking or disliking. They have ruined my life as they have ruined and are ruining the lives of thousands and hundreds of thousands of human beings, and I cannot help connecting the effect with the cause. I understand that they want to earn money like lawyers and others, and I would willingly give them half my income, and all who realize what they are doing would willingly give them half of their possessions, if only they would not interfere with our family life and would never come near us. I have not collected evidence, but I know dozens of cases (there are any number of them!) where they have killed a child in its mother's womb asserting that she could not give it birth, though she has had children quite safely later on; or they have killed the mother on the pretext of performing some operation. No one reckons these murders any more than they reckoned the murders of the Inquisition, because it is supposed that it is done for the good of

by their employers. —*A. M.*

mankind. It is impossible to number all the crimes they commit. But all those crimes are as nothing compared to the moral corruption of materialism they introduce into the world, especially through women.

"I don't lay stress on the fact that if one is to follow their instructions, then on account of the infection which exists everywhere and in everything, people would not progress towards greater unity but towards separation; for according to their teaching we ought all to sit apart and not remove the carbolic atomizer from our mouths (though now they have discovered that even that is of no avail). But that does not matter either. The principal poison lies in the demoralization of the world, especially of women.

"Today one can no longer say: 'You are not living rightly, live better.' One can't say that, either to oneself or to anyone else. If you live a bad life it is caused by the abnormal functioning of your nerves, etc. So you must go to them, and they will prescribe eight penn'orth of medicine from a chemist, which you must take!

"You get still worse: then more medicine and the doctor again. An excellent trick!

"That however is not the point. All I wish to say is that she nursed her babies perfectly well and that only her pregnancy and the nursing of her babies saved me from the torments of jealousy. Had it not been for that it would all have happened sooner. The children saved me and her. In eight years she had five children and nursed all except the first herself."

"And where are your children now?" I asked.

"The children?" he repeated in a frightened voice.

"Forgive me, perhaps it is painful for you to be reminded of them."

"No, it does not matter. My wife's sister and brother have taken them. They would not let me have them. I gave them my estate, but they did not give them up to me. You know I am a sort of lunatic. I have left them now and am going away. I have seen them, but they won't let me have them because I might bring them up so that they would not be like their parents, and they have to be just like them. Oh well, what is to be done? Of course they won't let me have them and won't trust me. Besides, I do not know whether I should be able to bring them up. I think not. I am a ruin, a cripple. Still I have one thing in me. I know! Yes, that is true, I know what others are far from knowing.

"Yes, my children are living and growing up just such savages as everybody around them. I saw them, saw them three times. I can do nothing for them, nothing. I am now going to my place in the south.

I have a little house and a small garden there.

"Yes, it will be a long time before people learn what I know. How much of iron and other metal there is in the sun and the stars is easy to find out, but anything that exposes our swinishness is difficult, terribly difficult!

"You at least listen to me, and I am grateful for that."

XVI

"You mentioned my children. There again, what terrible lies are told about children! Children a blessing from God, a joy! That is all a lie. It was so once upon a time, but now it is not so at all. Children are a torment and nothing else. Most mothers feel this quite plainly, and sometimes inadvertently say so. Ask most mothers of our propertied classes and they will tell you that they do not want to have children for fear of their falling ill and dying. They don't want to nurse[18] them if they do have them, for fear of becoming too much attached to them and having to suffer. The pleasure a baby gives them by its loveliness, its little hands and feet, and its whole body, is not as great as the suffering caused by the very fear of its possibly falling ill and dying, not to speak of its actual illness or death. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages it seems disadvantageous, and therefore undesirable, to have children. They say this quite frankly and boldly, imagining that these feelings of theirs arise from their love of children, a good and laudable feeling of which they are proud. They do not notice that by this reflection they plainly repudiate love, and only affirm their own selfishness. They get less pleasure from a baby's loveliness than suffering from fear on its account, and therefore the baby they would love is not wanted. They do not sacrifice themselves for a beloved being, but sacrifice a being whom they might love, for their own sakes.

"It is clear that this is not love but selfishness. But one has not the heart to blame them—the mothers in well-to-do families—for that selfishness, when one remembers how dreadfully they suffer on account of their children's health, again thanks to the influence of those same doctors among our well-to-do classes. Even now, when I do but remember my wife's life and the condition she was in during the first years when we had three or four children and she was absorbed in

[18] The practice of employing wet-nurses was very much more general in Russia than in the English-speaking countries. —*A. M.*

them, I am seized with horror! We led no life at all, but were in a state of constant danger, of escape from it, recurring danger, again followed by a desperate struggle and another escape—always as if we were on a sinking ship. Sometimes it seemed to me that this was done on purpose and that she pretended to be anxious about the children in order to subdue me. It solved all questions in her favour with such tempting simplicity. It sometimes seemed as if all she did and said on these occasions was pretence. But no! She herself suffered terribly, and continually tormented herself about the children and their health and illnesses. It was torture for her and for me too; and it was impossible for her not to suffer. After all, the attachment to her children, the animal need of feeding, caressing, and protecting them, was there as with most women, but there was not the lack of imagination and reason that there is in animals. A hen is not afraid of what may happen to her chick, does not know all the diseases that may befall it, and does not know all those remedies with which people imagine that they can save from illness and death. And for a hen her young are not a source of torment. She does for them what it is natural and pleasurable for her to do; her young ones are a pleasure to her. When a chick falls ill her duties are quite definite: she warms and feeds it. And doing this she knows that she is doing all that is necessary. If her chick dies she does not ask herself why it died, or where it has gone to; she cackles for a while, and then leaves off and goes on living as before. But for our unfortunate women, my wife among them, it was not so. Not to mention illnesses and how to cure them, she was always hearing and reading from all sides endless rules for the rearing and educating of children, which were continually being superseded by others. This is the way to feed a child: feed it in this way, on such a thing; no, not on such a thing, but in this way; clothes, drinks, baths, putting to bed, walking, fresh air—for all these things we, especially she, heard of new rules every week, just as if children had only begun to be born into the world since yesterday. And if a child that had not been fed or bathed in the right way or at the right time fell ill, it appeared that we were to blame for not having done what we ought.

"That was so while they were well. It was a torment even then. But if one of them happened to fall ill, it was all up: a regular hell! It is supposed that illness can be cured and that there is a science about it, and people—doctors—who know about it. Ah, but not all of them know—only the very best. When a child is ill one must get hold of the very best one, the one who saves, and then the child is saved; but if you don't get that doctor, or if you don't live in the place where that

doctor lives, the child is lost. This was not a creed peculiar to her, it is the creed of all the women of our class, and she heard nothing else from all sides. Catherine Semënovna lost two children because Iván Zakhárych was not called in in time, but Iván Zakhárych saved Mary Ivánovna's eldest girl, and the Petróvs moved in time to various hotels by the doctor's advice, and the children remained alive; but if they had not been segregated the children would have died. Another who had a delicate child moved south by the doctor's advice and saved the child. How can she help being tortured and agitated all the time, when the lives of the children for whom she has an animal attachment depend on her finding out in time that what Iván Zakhárych will say! But what Iván Zakhárych will say nobody knows, and he himself least of all, for he is well aware that he knows nothing and therefore cannot be of any use, but just shuffles about at random so that people should not cease to believe that he knows something or other. You see, had she been wholly an animal she would not have suffered so, and if she had been quite a human being she would have had faith in God and would have said and thought, as a believer does: 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. One can't escape from God.'

"Our whole life with the children, for my wife and consequently for me, was not a joy but a torment. How could she help torturing herself? She tortured herself incessantly. Sometimes when we had just made peace after some scene of jealousy, or simply after a quarrel, and thought we should be able to live, to read, and to think a little, we had no sooner settled down to some occupation than the news came that Vásya was being sick, or Másha showed symptoms of dysentery, or Andrúsha had a rash, and there was an end to peace, it was not life anymore. Where was one to drive to? For what doctor? How isolate the child? And then it's a case of enemas, temperatures, medicines, and doctors. Hardly is that over before something else begins. We had no regular settled family life but only, as I have already said, continual escapes from imaginary and real dangers. It is like that in most families nowadays, you know, but in my family it was especially acute. My wife was a child-loving and a credulous woman.

"So the presence of children not only failed to improve our life but poisoned it. Besides, the children were a new cause of dissension. As soon as we had children they became the means and the object of our discord, and more often the older they grew. They were not only the object of discord but the weapons of our strife. We used our children, as it were, to fight one another with. Each of us had a favourite weapon among them for our strife. I used to fight her chiefly through Vásya,

the eldest boy, and she me through Lisa. Besides that, as they grew older and their characters became defined, it came about that they grew into allies whom each of us tried to draw to his or her side. They, poor things, suffered terribly from this, but we, with our incessant warfare, had no time to think of that. The girl was my ally, and the eldest boy, who resembled his mother and was her favourite, was often hateful to me."

XVII

"Well, and so we lived. Our relations to one another grew more and more hostile and at last reached a stage where it was not disagreement that caused hostility but hostility that caused disagreement. Whatever she might say I disagreed with beforehand, and it was just the same with her.

"In the fourth year we both, it seemed, came to the conclusion that we could not understand one another. We no longer tried to bring any dispute to a conclusion. We invariably kept to our own opinions even about the most trivial questions, but especially about the children. As I now recall them the views I maintained were not at all so dear to me that I could not have given them up; but she was of the opposite opinion and to yield meant yielding to her, and that I could not do. It was the same with her. She probably considered herself quite in the right towards me, and as for me I always thought myself a saint towards her. When we were alone together we were doomed almost to silence, or to conversations such as I am convinced animals can carry on with one another: 'What is the time? Time to go to bed. What is today's dinner? Where shall we go? What is there in the papers? Send for the doctor; Másha has a sore throat.' We only needed to go a hairsbreadth beyond this impossibly limited circle of conversation for irritation to flare up. We had collisions and acrimonious words about the coffee, a tablecloth, a trap, a lead at bridge,[19] all of them things that could not be of any importance to either of us. In me at any rate there often raged a terrible hatred of her. Sometimes I watched her pouring out tea, swinging her leg, lifting a spoon to her mouth, smacking her lips and drawing in some liquid, and I hated her for these things as though they were the worst possible actions. I did not then notice

[19]The card-game named in the original, and then much played in Russia, was *vint*, which resembles bridge. —*A. M.*

that the periods of anger corresponded quite regularly and exactly to the periods of what we called love. A period of love—then a period of animosity; an energetic period of love, then a long period of animosity; a weaker manifestation of love, and a shorter period of animosity. We did not then understand that this love and animosity were one and the same animal feeling only at opposite poles. To live like that would have been awful had we understood our position; but we neither understood nor saw it. Both salvation and punishment for man lie in the fact that if he lives wrongly he can befog himself so as not to see the misery of his position. And this we did. She tried to forget herself in intense and always hurried occupation with household affairs, busying herself with the arrangements of the house, her own and the children's clothes, their lessons, and their health; while I had my own occupations: wine, my office duties, shooting, and cards. We were both continually occupied, and we both felt that the busier we were the nastier we might be to each other. 'It's all very well for you to grimace,' I thought, 'but you have harassed me all night with your scenes, and I have a meeting on.' 'It's all very well for you,' she not only thought but said, 'but I have been awake all night with the baby.' Those new theories of hypnotism, psychic diseases, and hysterics are not a simple folly, but a dangerous and repulsive one. Charcot would certainly have said that my wife was hysterical, and that I was abnormal, and he would no doubt have tried to cure me. But there was nothing to cure.

"Thus we lived in a perpetual fog, not seeing the condition we were in. And if what did happen had not happened, I should have gone on living so to old age and should have thought, when dying, that I had led a good life. I should not have realized the abyss of misery and horrible falsehood in which I wallowed.

"We were like two convicts hating each other and chained together, poisoning one another's lives and trying not to see it. I did not then know that ninety-nine percent of married people live in a similar hell to the one I was in and that it cannot be otherwise. I did not then know this either about others or about myself.

"It is strange what coincidences there are in regular, or even in irregular, lives! Just when the parents find life together unendurable, it becomes necessary to move to town for the children's education."

He stopped, and once or twice gave vent to his strange sounds, which were now quite like suppressed sobs. We were approaching a station.

"What is the time?" he asked.

I looked at my watch. It was two o'clock.

"You are not tired?" he asked.

"No, but you are?"

"I am suffocating. Excuse me, I will walk up and down and drink some water."

He went unsteadily through the carriage. I remained alone thinking over what he had said, and I was so engrossed in thought that I did not notice when he reentered by the door at the other end of the carriage.

XVIII

"Yes, I keep diverging," he began. "I have thought much over it. I now see many things differently and I want to express it.

"Well, so we lived in town. In town a man can live for a hundred years without noticing that he has long been dead and has rotted away. He has no time to take account of himself, he is always occupied. Business affairs, social intercourse, health, art, the children's health and their education. Now one has to receive so-and-so and so-and-so, go to see so-and-so and so-and-so; now one has to go and look at this, and hear this man or that woman. In town, you know, there are at any given moment one or two, or even three celebrities whom one must on no account miss seeing. Then one has to undergo a treatment oneself or get someone else attended to, then there are teachers, tutors, and governesses, but one's own life is quite empty. Well, so we lived and felt less the painfulness of living together. Besides at first we had splendid occupations, arranging things in a new place, in new quarters; and we were also occupied in going from the town to the country and back to town again.

"We lived so through one winter, and the next there occurred, unnoticed by anyone, an apparently unimportant thing, but the cause of all that happened later.

"She was not well and the doctors told her not to have children, and taught her how to avoid it. To me it was disgusting. I struggled against it, but she with frivolous obstinacy insisted on having her own way and I submitted. The last excuse for our swinish life—children—was then taken away, and life became viler than ever.

"To a peasant, a labouring man, children are necessary; though it is hard for him to feed them, still he needs them, and therefore his marital relations have a justification. But to us who have children, more children are unnecessary; they are an additional care and expense, a further division of property, and a burden. So our swinish life has

no justification. We either artificially deprive ourselves of children or regard them as a misfortune, the consequences of carelessness, and that is still worse.

"We have no justification. But we have fallen morally so low that we do not even feel the need of any justification.

"The majority of the present educated world devote themselves to this kind of debauchery without the least qualm of conscience.

"There is indeed nothing that can feel qualms, for conscience in our society is nonexistent, unless one can call public opinion and the criminal law a 'conscience.' In this case neither the one nor the other is infringed: there is no reason to be ashamed of public opinion for everybody acts in the same way—Mary Pávlovna, Iván Zakhárych, and the rest. Why breed paupers or deprive oneself of the possibility of social life? There is no need to fear or be ashamed in face of the criminal law either. Those shameless hussies, or soldiers' wives, throw their babies into ponds or wells, and they of course must be put into prison, but we do it all at the proper time and in a clean way.

"We lived like that for another two years. The means employed by those scoundrel-doctors evidently began to bear fruit; she became physically stouter and handsomer, like the late beauty of summer's end. She felt this and paid attention to her appearance. She developed a provocative kind of beauty which made people restless. She was in the full vigour of a well fed and excited woman of thirty who is not bearing children. Her appearance disturbed people. When she passed men she attracted their notice. She was like a fresh, well fed harnessed horse, whose bridle has been removed. There was no bridle, as is the case with ninety-nine hundredths of our women. And I felt this—and was frightened."

XIX

He suddenly rose and sat down close to the window.

"Pardon me," he muttered and, with his eyes fixed on the window, he remained silent for about three minutes. Then he sighed deeply and moved back to the seat opposite mine. His face was quite changed, his eyes looked pathetic, and his lips puckered strangely, almost as if he were smiling. "I am rather tired but I will go on with it. We have still plenty of time, it is not dawn yet. Ah, yes," he began after lighting a cigarette, "She grew plumper after she stopped having babies, and her malady—that everlasting worry about the children—began to pass …

at least not actually to pass, but she was it were woke up from an intoxication, came to herself, and saw that there was a whole divine world with its joys which she had forgotten, but a divine world she did not know how to live in and did not at all understand. 'I must not miss it! Time is passing and won't come back!' So, I imagine, she thought, or rather felt, nor could she have thought or felt differently: she had been brought up in the belief that there was only one thing in the world worthy of attention—love. She had married and received something of that love, but not nearly what had been promised and was expected. Even that had been accompanied by many disappointments and sufferings, and then this unexpected torment: so many children! The torments exhausted her. And then, thanks to the obliging doctors, she learned that it is possible to avoid having children. She was very glad, tried it, and became alive again for the one thing she knew—for love. But love with a husband befouled by jealousy and all kinds of anger, was not longer the thing she wanted. She had visions of some other, clean, new love; at least I thought she had. And she began to look about her as if expecting something. I saw this and could not help feeling anxious. It happened again and again that while talking to me, as usual through other people—that is, telling a third person what she meant for me—she boldly, without remembering that she had expressed the opposite opinion an hour before, declared, though half-jokingly, that a mother's cares are a fraud, and that it is not worth while to devote one's life to children when one is young and can enjoy life. She gave less attention to the children, and less frenziedly than before, but gave more and more attention to herself, to her appearance (though she tried to conceal this), and to her pleasures, even to her accomplishments. She again enthusiastically took to the piano which she had quite abandoned, and it all began from that."

He turned his weary eyes to the window again but, evidently making an effort, immediately continued once more.

"Yes, that man made his appearance …" he became confused and once or twice made that peculiar sound with his nose.

I could see that it was painful for him to name that man, to recall him, or speak about him. But he made an effort and, as if he had broken the obstacle that hindered him, continued resolutely.

"He was a worthless man in my opinion and according to my estimate. And not because of the significance he acquired in my life but because he really was so. However, the fact that he was a poor sort of fellow only served to show how irresponsible she was. If it had not been he then it would have been another. It had to be!"

Again he paused. "Yes, he was a musician, a violinist; not a professional, but a semiprofessional semi-society man.

"His father, a landowner, was a neighbor of my father's. He had been ruined, and his children—there were three boys—had obtained settled positions; only this one, the youngest, had been handed over to his godmother in Paris. There he was sent to the Conservatoire because he had a talent for music, and he came out as a violinist and played at concerts. He was a man …" Having evidently intended to say something bad about him, Pózdnyshev restrained himself and rapidly said: "Well, I don't really know how he lived, I only know that he returned to Russia that year and appeared in my house.

"With moist almond-shaped eyes, red smiling lips, a small waxed moustache, hair done in the latest fashion, and an insipidly pretty face, he was what women call 'not bad looking.' His figure was weak though not misshapen, and he had a specially developed posterior, like a woman's, or such as Hottentots are said to have. They too are reported to be musical. Pushing himself as far as possible into familiarity, but sensitive and always ready to yield at the slightest resistance, he maintained his dignity in externals, wore buttoned boots of a special Parisian fashion, bright-coloured ties, and other things foreigners acquire in Paris, which by their noticeable novelty always attract women. There was an affected external gaiety in his manner. That manner, you know, of speaking about everything in allusions and unfinished sentences, as if you knew it all, remembered it, and could complete it yourself.

"It was he with his music who was the cause of it all. You know at the trial the case was put as if it was all caused by jealousy. No such thing; that is, I don't mean 'no such thing,' it was and yet it was not. At the trial it was decided that I was a wronged husband and that I had killed her while defending my outraged honour (that is the phrase they employ, you know). That is why I was acquitted. I tried to explain matters at the trial but they took it that I was trying to rehabilitate my wife's honour.

"What my wife's relations with that musician may have been has no meaning for me, or for her either. What has a meaning is what I have told you about—my swinishness. The whole thing was an outcome of the terrible abyss between us of which I have told you—that dreadful tension of mutual hatred which made the first excuse sufficient to produce a crisis. The quarrels between us had for some time past become frightful, and were all the more startling because they alternated with similarly intense animal passion.

"If he had not appeared there would have been someone else. If the occasion had not been jealousy it would have been something else. I maintain that all husbands who live as I did, must either live dissolutely, separate, or kill themselves or their wives as I have done. If there is anybody who has not done so, he is a rare exception. Before I ended as I did, I had several times been on the verge of suicide, and she too had repeatedly tried to poison herself."

XX

"Well, that is how things were going not long before it happened. We seemed to be living in a state of truce and had no reason to infringe it. Then we chanced to speak about a dog which I said had been awarded a medal at an exhibition. She remarked, 'Not a medal, but an honourable mention.' A dispute ensues. We jump from one subject to another, reproach one another, 'Oh, that's nothing new, it's always been like that.' 'You said …' 'No, I didn't say so.' 'Then I am telling lies! …' You feel that at any moment that dreadful quarrelling which makes you wish to kill yourself or her will begin. You know it will begin immediately, and fear it like fire and therefore wish to restrain yourself, but your whole being is seized with fury. She being in the same or even a worse condition purposely misinterprets every word you say, giving it a wrong meaning. Her every word is venomous; where she alone knows that I am most sensitive, she stabs. It gets worse and worse. I shout: 'Be quiet!' or something of that kind.

"She rushes out of the room and into the nursery. I try to hold her back in order to finish what I was saying, to prove my point, and I seize her by the arm. She pretends that I have hurt her and screams: 'Children, your father is striking me!' I shout: 'Don't lie!' 'But it's not the first time!' she screams, or something like that. The children rush to her. She calms them down. I say, 'Don't sham!' She says, 'Everything is sham in your eyes, you would kill anyone and say they were shamming. Now I have understood you. That's just what you want!' 'Oh, I wish you were dead as a dog!' I shout. I remember how those dreadful words horrified me. I never thought I could utter such dreadful, coarse words, and am surprised that they escaped me. I shout them and rush away into my study and sit down and smoke. I hear her go out into the hall preparing to go away. I ask, 'Where are you going to?' She does not reply. 'Well, devil take her,' I say to myself, and go back to my study and lie down and smoke. A thousand

different plans of how to revenge myself on her and get rid of her, and how to improve matters and go on as if nothing had happened, come into my head. I think all that and go on smoking and smoking. I think of running away from her, hiding myself, going to America. I get as far as dreaming of how I shall get rid of her, how splendid that will be, and how I shall unite with another woman—quite different. I shall get rid of her either by her dying or by a divorce, and I plan how it is to be done. I notice that I am getting confused and not thinking of what is necessary, and to prevent myself from perceiving that my thoughts are not to the point I go on smoking.

"Life in the house goes on. The governess comes in and asks: 'Where is madame? When will she be back?' The footman asks whether he is to serve tea. I go to the dining room. The children, especially Lisa who already understands, gaze inquiringly and disapprovingly at me. We drink tea in silence. She has still not come back. The evening passes, she has not returned, and two different feelings alternate within me. Anger because she torments me and all the children by her absence which will end by her returning; and fear that she will not return but will do something to herself. I would go to fetch her, but where am I to look for her? At her sister's? But it would be so stupid to go and ask. And it's all the better: if she is bent on tormenting someone, let her torment herself. Besides, that is what she is waiting for; and next time it would be worse still. But suppose she is not with her sister but is doing something to herself, or has already done it! It's past ten, past eleven! I don't go to the bedroom—it would be stupid to lie there alone waiting—but I'll not lie down here either. I wish to occupy my mind, to write a letter or to read, but I can't do anything. I sit alone in my study, tortured, angry, and listening. It's three o'clock, four o'clock, and she is not back. Towards morning I fall asleep. I wake up, she has still not come!

"Everything in the house goes on in the usual way, but all are perplexed and look at me inquiringly and reproachfully, considering me to be the cause of it all. And in me the same struggle still continues: anger that she is torturing me, and anxiety for her.

"At about eleven in the morning her sister arrives as her envoy. And the usual talk begins. 'She is in a terrible state. What does it all mean?' 'After all, nothing has happened.' I speak of her impossible character and say that I have not done anything.

" 'But, you know, it can't go on like this,' says her sister.

" 'It's all her doing and not mine,' I say. 'I won't take the first step. If it means separation, let it be separation.'

"My sister-in-law goes away having achieved nothing. I had boldly said that I would not take the first step; but after her departure, when I came out of my study and saw the children piteous and frightened, I was prepared to take the first step. I should be glad to do it, but I don't know how. Again I pace up and down and smoke; at lunch I drink vodka and wine and attain what I unconsciously desire—I no longer see the stupidity and humiliation of my position.

"At about three she comes. When she meets me she does not speak. I imagine that she has submitted, and begin to say that I had been provoked by her reproaches. She, with the same stern expression on her terribly harassed face, says that she has not come for explanations but to fetch the children, because we cannot live together. I begin telling her that the fault is not mine and that she provoked me beyond endurance. She looks severely and solemnly at me and says: 'Do not say any more, you will repent it.' I tell her that I cannot stand comedies. Then she cries out something I don't catch, and rushes into her room. The key clicks behind her—she has locked herself in. I try the door, but getting no answer, go away angrily. Half-an-hour later Lisa runs in crying. 'What is it? Has anything happened?' 'We can't hear mama.' We go. I pull at the double doors with all my might. The bolt had not been firmly secured, and the two halves both open. I approach the bed, on which she is lying awkwardly in her petticoats and with a pair of high boots on. An empty opium bottle is on the table. She is brought to herself. Tears follow, and a reconciliation. No, not a reconciliation: in the heart of each there is still the old animosity, with the additional irritation produced by the pain of this quarrel which each attributes to the other. But one must of course finish it all somehow, and life goes on in the old way. And so the same kind of quarrel, and even worse ones, occurred continually: once a week, once a month, or at times every day. It was always the same. Once I had already procured a passport to go abroad—the quarrel had continued for two days. But there was again a partial explanation, a partial reconciliation, and I did not go."

XXI

"So those were our relations when that man appeared. He arrived in Moscow—his name is Trukhachévski—and came to my house. It was in the morning. I received him. We had once been on familiar terms and he tried to maintain a familiar tone by using noncommittal expressions,

but I definitely adopted a conventional tone and he at once submitted to it. I disliked him from the first glance. But curiously enough a strange and fatal force led me not to repulse him, not to keep him away, but on the contrary to invite him to the house. After all, what could have been simpler than to converse with him coldly, and say goodbye without introducing him to my wife? But no, as if purposely, I began talking about his playing, and said I had been told he had given up the violin. He replied that, on the contrary, he now played more than ever. He referred to the fact that there had been a time when I myself played. I said I had given it up but that my wife played well. It is an astonishing thing that from the first day, from the first hour of my meeting him, my relations with him were such as they might have been only after all that subsequently happened. There was something strained in them: I noticed every word, every expression he or I used, and attributed importance to them.

"I introduced him to my wife. The conversation immediately turned to music, and he offered to be of use to her by playing with her. My wife was, as usual of late, very elegant, attractive, and disquietingly beautiful. He evidently pleased her at first sight. Besides she was glad that she would have someone to accompany her on a violin, which she was so fond of that she used to engage a violinist from the theatre for the purpose; and her face reflected her pleasure. But catching sight of me she at once understood my feeling and changed her expression, and a game of mutual deception began. I smiled pleasantly to appear as if I liked it. He, looking at my wife as all immoral men look at pretty women, pretended that he was only interested in the subject of the conversation—which no longer interested him at all; while she tried to seem indifferent, though my false smile of jealousy with which she was familiar, and his lustful gaze, evidently excited her. I saw that from their first encounter her eyes were particularly bright and, probably as a result of my jealousy, it seemed as if an electric current had been established between them, evoking as it were an identity of expressions, looks, and smiles. She blushed and he blushed. She smiled and he smiled. We spoke about music, Paris, and all sorts of trifles. Then he rose to go, and stood smilingly, holding his hat against his twitching thigh and looking now at her and now at me, as if in expectation of what we would do. I remember that instant just because at that moment I might not have invited him, and then nothing would have happened. But I glanced at him and at her and said silently to myself, 'Don't suppose that I am jealous, or that I am afraid of you,' I added mentally addressing

him, and I invited him to come some evening and bring his violin to play with my wife. She glanced at me with surprise, flushed, and as if frightened began to decline, saying that she did not play well enough. This refusal irritated me still more, and I insisted the more on his coming. I remember the curious feeling with which I looked at the back of his head, with the black hair parted in the middle contrasting with the white nape of his neck, as he went out with his peculiar springing gait suggestive of some kind of a bird. I could not conceal from myself that that man's presence tormented me. 'It depends on me,' I reflected, 'to act so as to see nothing more of him. But that would be to admit that I am afraid of him. No, I am not afraid of him; it would be too humiliating,' I said to myself. And there in the anteroom, knowing that my wife heard me, I insisted that he should come that evening with his violin. He promised to do so, and left.

"In the evening he brought his violin and they played. But it took a long time to arrange matters—they had not the music they wanted, and my wife could not without preparation play what they had. I was very fond of music and sympathized with their playing, arranging a music stand for him and turning over the pages. They played a few things, some songs without words, and a little sonata by Mozart. They played splendidly, and he had an exceptionally fine tone. Besides that, he had a refined and elevated taste not at all in correspondence with his character.

"He was of course a much better player than my wife, and he helped her, while at the same time politely praising her playing. He behaved himself very well. My wife seemed interested only in music and was very simple and natural. But though I pretended to be interested in the music I was tormented by jealousy all the evening.

"From the first moment his eyes met my wife's I saw that the animal in each of them, regardless of all conditions of their position and of society, asked, 'May I?' and answered, 'Oh yes, certainly.' I saw that he had not at all expected to find my wife, a Moscow lady, so attractive, and that he was very pleased. For he had no doubt whatever that she was *willing*. The only crux was whether that unendurable husband could hinder them. Had I been pure I should not have understood this, but, like the majority of men, I had myself regarded women in that way before I married and therefore could read his mind like a manuscript. I was particularly tormented because I saw without doubt that she had no other feeling towards me than a continual irritation only occasionally interrupted by the habitual sensuality; but that this man—by his external refinement and novelty and still more

by his undoubtedly great talent for music, by the nearness that comes of playing together, and by the influence music, especially the violin, exercises on impressionable natures—was sure not only to please but certainly and without the least hesitation to conquer, crush, bind her, twist her round his little finger and do whatever he like with her. I could not help seeing this and I suffered terribly. But for all that, or perhaps on account of it, some force obliged me against my will to be not merely polite but amiable to him. Whether I did it for my wife or for him, to show that I was not afraid of him, or whether I did it to deceive myself—I don't know, but I know that from the first I could not behave naturally with him. In order not to yield to my wish to kill him there and then, I had to make much of him. I gave him expensive wines at supper, went into raptures over his playing, spoke to him with a particularly amiable smile, and invited him to dine and play with my wife again the next Sunday. I told him I would ask a few friends who were fond of music to hear him. And so it ended."

Greatly agitated, Pózdnyshev changed his position and emitted his peculiar sound.

"It is strange how the presence of that man acted on me," he began again, with an evident effort to keep calm. "I come home from the Exhibition a day or two later, enter the anteroom, and suddenly feel something heavy, as if a stone had fallen on my heart, and I cannot understand what it is. It was that passing through the anteroom I noticed something which reminded me of him. I realized what it was only in my study, and went back to the anteroom to make sure. Yes, I was not mistaken, there was his overcoat. A fashionable coat, you know. (Though I did not realize it, I observed everything connected with him with extraordinary attention.) I inquire: sure enough he is there. I pass on to the dancing room, not through the drawing room but through the schoolroom. My daughter, Lisa, sits reading a book and the nurse sits with the youngest boy at the table, making a lid of some kind spin round. The door to the dancing room is shut but I hear the sound of a rhythmic arpeggio and his and her voices. I listen, but cannot make out anything.

"Evidently the sound of the piano is purposely made to drown the sound of their voices, their kisses … perhaps. My God! What was aroused in me! Even to think of the beast that then lived in me fills me with horror! My heart suddenly contracted, stopped, and then began to beat like a hammer. My chief feeling, a usual whenever I was enraged, was one of self pity. 'In the presence of the children! of their nurse!' thought I. Probably I looked awful, for Lisa gazed at

me with strange eyes. 'What am I to do?' I asked myself. 'Go in? I can't: heaven only knows what I should do. But neither can I go away.' The nurse looked at me as if she understood my position. 'But it is impossible not to go in,' I said to myself, and I quickly opened the door. He was sitting at the piano playing those arpeggios with his large white upturned fingers. She was standing in the curve of the piano, bending over some open music. She was the first to see or hear, and glanced at me. Whether she was frightened and pretended not to be, or whether she was really not frightened, anyway she did not start or move but only blushed, and that not at once.

" 'How glad I am that you have come: we have not decided what to play on Sunday,' she said in a tone she would not have used to me had we been alone. This and her using the word 'we' of herself and him, filled me with indignation. I greeted him silently.

"He pressed my hand, and at once, with a smile which I thought distinctly ironic, began to explain that he had brought some music to practise for Sunday, but that they disagreed about what to play: a classical but more difficult piece, namely Beethoven's sonata for the violin, or a few little pieces. It was all so simple and natural that there was nothing one could cavil at, yet I felt certain that it was all untrue and that they had agreed how to deceive me.

"One of the most distressing conditions of life for a jealous man (and everyone is jealous in our world) are certain society conventions which allow a man and a woman the greatest and most dangerous proximity. You would become a laughingstock to others if you tried to prevent such nearness at balls, or the nearness of doctors to their women patients, or of people occupied with art, sculpture, and especially music. A couple are occupied with the noblest of arts, music; this demands a certain nearness, and there is nothing reprehensible in that and only a stupid jealous husband can see anything undesirable in it. Yet everybody knows that it is by means of those very pursuits, especially of music, that the greater part of the adulteries in our society occur. I evidently confused them by the confusion I betrayed: for a long time I could not speak. I was like a bottle held upside down from which the water does not flow because it is too full. I wanted to abuse him and to turn him out, but again felt that I must treat him courteously and amiably. And I did so. I acted as though I approved of it all, and again because of the strange feeling which made me behave to him the more amiably the more his presence distressed me, I told him that I trusted his taste and advised her to do the same. He stayed as long as was necessary to efface the unpleasant impression caused by my

sudden entrance—looking frightened and remaining silent—and then left, pretending that it was now decided what to play next day. I was however fully convinced that compared to what interested them the question of what to play was quite indifferent.

"I saw him out to the anteroom with special politeness. (How could one do less than accompany a man who had come to disturb the peace and destroy the happiness of a whole family?) And I pressed his soft white hand with particular warmth."

XXII

"I did not speak to her all that day—I could not. Nearness to her aroused in me such hatred of her that I was afraid of myself. At dinner in the presence of the children she asked me when I was going away. I had to go next week to the District Meetings of the Zemstvo. I told her the date. She asked whether I did not want anything for the journey. I did not answer but sat silent at table and then went in silence to my study. Latterly she used never to come to my room especially not at that time of day. I lay in my study filled with anger. Suddenly I heard her familiar step, and the terrible, monstrous idea entered my head that she, like Uriah's wife, wished to conceal the sin she had already committed and that was why she was coming to me at such an unusual time. 'Can she be coming to me?' thought I, listening to her approaching footsteps. 'If she is coming here, then I am right,' and an expressible hatred of her took possession of me. Nearer and nearer came the steps. Is it possible that she won't pass on to the dancing room? No, the door creaks and in the doorway appears her tall handsome figure, on her face and in her eyes a timid ingratiating look which she tries to hide, but which I see and the meaning of which I know. I almost choked, so long did I hold my breath, and still looking at her I grasped my cigarette case and began to smoke.

" 'Now how can you? One comes to sit with you for a bit, and you begin smoking'—and she sat down close to me on the sofa, leaning against me. I moved away so as not to touch her.

" 'I see you are dissatisfied at my wanting to play on Sunday,' she said.

" 'I am not at all dissatisfied,' I said.

" 'As if I don't see!'

" 'Well, I congratulate you on seeing. But I only see that you behave like a coquette. … You always find pleasure in all kinds of vileness, but

to me it is terrible!'

" 'Oh, well, if you are going to scold like a cabman I'll go away.'

" 'Go, but remember that if you don't value the family honour, I value not you (devil take you) but the honour of the family!'

" 'But what is the matter? What?'

" 'Go away, for God's sake be off!'

"Whether she pretended not to understand what it was about or really did not understand, at any rate she took offence, grew angry, and did not go away but stood in the middle of the room.

" 'You have really become impossible,' she began. 'You have a character that even an angel could not put up with.' And as usual trying to sting me as painfully as possible, she reminded me of my conduct to my sister (an incident when, being exasperated, I said rude things to my sister); she knew I was distressed about it and she stung me just on that spot. 'After that, nothing from you will surprise me,' she said.

" 'Yes! Insult me, humiliate me, disgrace me, and then put the blame on me,' I said to myself, and suddenly I was seized by such terrible rage as I had never before experienced.

"For the first time I wished to give physical expression to that rage. I jumped up and went towards her; but just as I jumped up I remembered becoming conscious of my rage and asking myself: 'Is it right to give way to this feeling?' and at once I answered that it was right, that it would frighten her, and instead of restraining my fury, I immediately began inflaming it still further, and was glad it burnt yet more fiercely within me.

" 'Be off, or I'll kill you!' I shouted, going up to her and seizing her by the arm. I consciously intensified the anger in my voice as I said this. And I suppose I was terrible for she was so frightened that she had not even the strength to go away, but only said: 'Vásya, what is it? What is the matter with you?'

" 'Go!' I roared louder still. 'No one but you can drive me to fury. I do not answer for myself!'

"Having given reins to my rage, I revelled in it and wished to do something still more unusual to show the extreme degree of my anger. I felt a terrible desire to beat her, to kill her, but knew that this would not do, and so to give vent to my fury I seized a paperweight from my table, again shouting 'Go!' and hurled it to the floor near her. I aimed it very exactly past her. Then she left the room, but stopped at the doorway, and immediately, while she still saw it (I did it so that she might see), I began snatching things from the table—candlesticks and

inkstand—and hurling them on the floor still shouting 'Go! Get out! I don't answer for myself!' She went away—and I immediately stopped.

"An hour later the nurse came to tell me that my wife was in hysterics. I went to her; she sobbed, laughed, could not speak, and her whole body was convulsed. She was not pretending, but was really ill.

"Towards morning she grew quiet, and we made peace under the influence of the feeling we called love.

"In the morning when, after our reconciliation, I confessed to her that I was jealous of Trukhachévski, she was not at all confused, but laughed most naturally; so strange did the very possibility of an infatuation for such a man seem to her, she said.

" 'Could a decent woman have any other feeling for such a man than the pleasure of his music? Why, if you like I am ready never to see him again … not even on Sunday, though everybody has been invited. Write and tell him that I am ill, and there's an end of it! Only it is unpleasant that anyone, especially he himself, should imagine that he is dangerous. I am too proud to allow anyone to think that of me!'

"And you know, she was not lying, she believed what she was saying; she hoped by those words to evoke in herself contempt for him and so to defend herself from him, but she did not succeed in doing so. Everything was against her, especially that accursed music. So it all ended, and on the Sunday the guests assembled and they again played together.

XXIII

"I suppose it is hardly necessary to say that I was very vain: if one is not vain there is nothing to live for in our usual way of life. So on that Sunday I arranged the dinner and the musical evening with much care. I bought the provisions myself and invited the guests.

"Towards six the visitors assembled. He came in evening dress with diamond studs that showed bad taste. He behaved in a free and easy manner, answered everything hurriedly with a smile of agreement and understanding, you know, with that peculiar expression which seems to say that all you may do or say is just what he expected. Everything that was not in good taste about him I noticed with particular pleasure, because it ought all to have had the effect of tranquilizing me and showing that he was so far beneath my wife that, as she had said, she could not lower herself to his level. I did not now allow myself to be jealous. In the first place I had worried through that torment and

needed rest, and secondly I wanted to believe my wife's assurances and did believe them. But though I was not jealous I was nevertheless not natural with either of them, and at dinner and during the first half of the evening before the music began I still followed their movements and looks.

"The dinner was, as dinners are, dull and pretentious. The music began pretty early. Oh, how I remember every detail of that evening! I remember how he brought in his violin, unlocked the case, took off the cover a lady had embroidered for him, drew out the violin, and began tuning it. I remember how my wife sat down at the piano with pretended unconcern, under which I saw that she was trying to conceal great timidity—chiefly as to her own ability—and then the usual A on the piano began, the pizzicato of the violin, and the arrangement of the music. Then I remember how they glanced at one another, turned to look at the audience who were seating themselves, said something to one another, and began. He took the first chords. His face grew serious, stern, and sympathetic, and listening to the sounds he produced, he touched the strings with careful fingers. The piano answered him. The music began. …"

Pózdnyshev paused and produced his strange sound several times in succession. He tried to speak, but sniffed, and stopped.

"They played Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*," he continued. "Do you know the first presto? You do?" he cried. "Ugh! Ugh! It is a terrible thing, that sonata. And especially that part. And in general music is a dreadful thing! What is it? I don't understand it. What is music? What does it do? And why does it do what it does? They say music exalts the soul. Nonsense, it is not true! It has an effect, an awful effect—I am speaking of myself—but not of an exalting kind. It has neither an exalting nor a debasing effect but it produces agitation. How can I put it? Music makes me forget myself, my real position; it transports me to some other position not my own. Under the influence of music it seems to me that I feel what I do not really feel, that I understand what I do not understand, that I can do what I cannot do. I explain it by the fact that music acts like yawning, like laughter: I am not sleepy, but I yawn when I see someone yawning; there is nothing for me to laugh at, but I laugh when I hear people laughing.

"Music carries me immediately and directly into the mental condition in which the man was who composed it. My soul merges with his and together with him I pass from one condition into another, but why this happens I don't know. You see, he who wrote, let us say, the *Kreutzer Sonata*—Beethoven—knew of course why he was in that con-

dition; that condition caused him to do certain actions and therefore that condition had a meaning for him, but for me—none at all. That is why music only agitates and doesn't lead to a conclusion. Well, when a military march is played the soldiers march to the music and the music has achieved its object. A dance is played, I dance and the music has achieved its object. Mass has been sung, I receive Communion, and that music too has reached a conclusion. Otherwise it is only agitating, and what ought to be done in that agitation is lacking. That is why music sometimes acts so dreadfully, so terribly. In China, music is a State affair. And that is as it should be. How can one allow anyone who pleases to hypnotize another, or many others, and do what he likes with them? And especially that this hypnotist should be the first immoral man who turns up?

"It is a terrible instrument in the hands of any chance user! Take that *Kreutzer Sonata*, for instance, how can that first presto be played in a drawing room among ladies in low-necked dresses? To hear that played, to clap a little, and then to eat ices and talk of the latest scandal? Such things should only be played on certain important significant occasions, and then only when certain actions answering to such music are wanted; play it then and do what the music has moved you to. Otherwise an awakening of energy and feeling unsuited both to the time and the place, to which no outlet is given, cannot but act harmfully. At any rate that piece had a terrible effect on me; it was as if quite new feelings, new possibilities, of which I had till then been unaware, had been revealed to me. 'That's how it is: not at all as I used to think and live, but that way,' something seemed to say within me. What this new thing was that had been revealed to me I could not explain to myself, but the consciousness of this new condition was very joyous. All those same people, including my wife and him, appeared in a new light.

"After that allegro they played the beautiful, but common and unoriginal, andante with trite variations, and the very weak finale. Then, at the request of the visitors, they played Ernst's *Elegy* and a few small pieces. They were all good, but they did not produce on me a one-hundredth part of the impression the first piece had. The effect of the first piece formed the background for them all.

"I felt lighthearted and cheerful the whole evening. I had never seen my wife as she was that evening. Those shining eyes, that severe, significant expression while she played, and her melting languor and feeble, pathetic, and blissful smile after they had finished. I saw all that but did not attribute any meaning to it except that she was feeling what

I felt, and that to her as to me new feelings, never before experienced, were revealed or, as it were, recalled. The evening ended satisfactorily and the visitors departed.

"Knowing that I had to go away to attend the Zemstvo Meetings two days later, Trukhachévski on leaving said he hoped to repeat the pleasure of that evening when he next came to Moscow. From this I concluded that he did not consider it possible to come to my house during my absence, and this pleased me.

"It turned out that as I should not be back before he left town, we should not see one another again.

"For the first time I pressed his hand with real pleasure, and thanked him for the enjoyment he had given us. In the same way he bade a final farewell to my wife. Their leave-taking seemed to be most natural and proper. Everything was splendid. My wife and I were both very well satisfied with our evening party.

XXIV

"Two days later I left for the Meetings, parting from my wife in the best and most tranquil of moods.

"In the district there was always an enormous amount to do and a quite special life, a special little world of its own. I spent two ten hour days at the Council. A letter from my wife was brought me on the second day and I read it there and then.

"She wrote about the children, about uncle, about the nurse, about shopping, and among other things she mentioned, as a most natural occurrence, that Trukhachévski had called, brought some music he had promised, and had offered to play again, but that she had refused.

"I did not remember his having promised any music, but thought he had taken leave for good, and I was therefore unpleasantly struck by this. I was however so busy that I had not time to think of it, and it was only in the evening when I had returned to my lodgings that I reread her letter.

"Besides the fact that Trukhachévski had called at my house during my absence, the whole tone of the letter seemed to me unnatural. The mad beast of jealousy began to growl in its kennel and wanted to leap out, but I was afraid of that beast and quickly fastened him in. 'What an abominable feeling this jealousy is!' I said to myself. 'What could be more natural than what she writes?'

"I went to bed and began thinking about the affairs awaiting me

next day. During those Meetings, sleeping in a new place, I usually slept badly, but now I fell asleep very quickly. And as sometimes happens, you know, you feel a kind of electric shock and wake up. So I awoke thinking of her, of my physical love for her, and of Trukhachévski, and of everything being accomplished between them. Horror and rage compressed my heart. But I began to reason with myself. 'What nonsense!' said I to myself. 'There are no grounds to go on, there is nothing and there has been nothing. How can I so degrade her and myself as to imagine such horrors? He is a sort of hired violinist, known as a worthless fellow, and suddenly an honourable woman, the respected mother of a family, *my* wife. … What absurdity!' So it seemed to me on the one hand. 'How could it help being so?' it seemed on the other. 'How could that simplest and most intelligible thing help happening—that for the sake of which I married her, for the sake of which I have been living with her, what alone I wanted of her, and which others including this musician must therefore also want? He is an unmarried man, healthy (I remember how he crunched the gristle of a cutlet and how greedily his red lips clung to the glass of wine), well fed, plump, and not merely unprincipled but evidently making it a principle to accept the pleasures that present themselves. And they have music, that most exquisite voluptuousness of the senses, as a link between them. What then could make him refrain? She? But who is she? She was, and still is, a mystery. I don't know her. I only know her as an animal. And nothing can or should restrain an animal.'

"Only then did I remember their faces that evening when, after the *Kreutzer Sonata*, they played some impassioned little piece, I don't remember by whom, impassioned to the point of obscenity. 'How dared I go away?' I asked myself, remembering their faces. Was it not clear that everything had happened between them that evening? Was it not evident already then that there was not only no barrier between them, but that they both, and she chiefly, felt a certain measure of shame after what had happened? I remember her weak, piteous, and beatific smile as she wiped the perspiration from her flushed face when I came up to the piano. Already then they avoided looking at one another, and only at supper when she was pouring out some water for her, they glanced at each other with the vestige of a smile. I now recalled with horror the glance and scarcely perceptible smile I had then caught. 'Yes, it is all over,' said one voice, and immediately the other voice said something entirely different. 'Something has come over you, it can't be that it is so,' said the other voice. It felt uncanny lying in the dark and I struck a light, and felt a kind of terror in that little room with its

yellow wallpaper. I lit a cigarette and, as always happens when one's thought go round and round in a circle of insoluble contradictions, I smoked, taking one cigarette after another in order to befog myself so as not to see those contradictions.

"I did not sleep all night, and at five in the morning, having decided that I could not continue in such a state of tension, I rose, woke the caretaker who attended me and sent him to get horses. I sent a note to the Council saying that I had been recalled to Moscow on urgent business and asking that one of the members should take my place. At eight o'clock I got into my trap and started."

XXV

The conductor entered and seeing that our candle had burnt down put it out, without supplying a fresh one. The day was dawning. Pózdnyshev was silent, but sighed deeply all the time the conductor was in the carriage. He continued his story only after the conductor had gone out, and in the semidarkness of the carriage only the rattle of the windows of the moving carriage and the rhythmic snoring of the clerk could be heard. In the half-light of dawn I could not see Posdnyshev's face at all, but only heard his voice becoming ever more and more excited and full of suffering.

"I had to travel twenty-four miles by road and eight hours by rail. It was splendid driving. It was frosty autumn weather, bright and sunny. The roads were in that condition when the tyres leave their dark imprint on them, you know. They were smooth, the light brilliant and the air invigorating. It was pleasant driving in the tarantass. When it grew lighter and I had started I felt easier. Looking at the houses, the fields, and the passersby, I forgot where I was going. Sometimes I felt that I was simply taking a drive, and that nothing of what was calling me back had taken place. This oblivion was peculiarly enjoyable. When I remembered where I was going to, I said to myself, 'We shall see when the time comes; I must not think about it.' When we were halfway an incident occurred which detained me and still further distracted my thoughts. The tarantass broke down and had to be repaired. That breakdown had a very important effect, for it caused me to arrive in Moscow at midnight, instead of at seven o'clock as I had expected, and to reach home between twelve and one, as I missed the express and had to travel by an ordinary train. Going to fetch a cart, having the tarantass mended, settling up, tea at the inn, a talk

with the innkeeper—all this still further diverted my attention. It was twilight before all was ready and I started again. By night it was even pleasanter driving than during the day. There was a new moon, a slight frost, still good roads, good horses, and a jolly driver, and as I went on I enjoyed it, hardly thinking at all of what lay before me; or perhaps I enjoyed it just because I knew what awaited me and was saying goodbye to the joys of life. But that tranquil mood, that ability to suppress my feelings, ended with my drive. As soon as I entered the train something entirely different began. That eight-hour journey in a railway carriage was something dreadful, which I shall never forget all my life. Whether it was that having taken my seat in the carriage I vividly imagined myself as having already arrived, or that railway travelling has such an exciting effect on people, at any rate from the moment I sat down in the train I could no longer control my imagination, and with extraordinary vividness which inflamed my jealousy it painted incessantly, one after another, pictures of what had gone on in my absence, of how she had been false to me. I burnt with indignation, anger, and a peculiar feeling of intoxication with my own humiliation, as I gazed at those pictures, and I could not tear myself away from them; I could not help looking at them, could not efface them, and could not help evoking them.

"That was not all. The more I gazed at those imaginary pictures the stronger grew my belief in their reality. The vividness with which they presented themselves to me seemed to serve as proof that what I imagined was real. It was as if some devil against my will invented and suggested to me the most terrible reflections. An old conversation I had had with Trukhachévski's brother came to my mind, and in a kind of ecstasy I rent my heart with that conversation, making it refer to Trukhachévski and my wife.

"That had occurred long before, but I recalled it. Turkhachevski's brother, I remember, in reply to a question whether he frequented houses of ill fame, had said that a decent man would not go to placed where there was danger of infection and it was dirty and nasty, since he could always find a decent woman. And now his brother had found my wife! 'True, she is not in her first youth, has lost a side tooth, and there is a slight puffiness about her; but it can't be helped, one has to take advantage of what one can get,' I imagined him to be thinking. 'Yes, it is condescending of him to take her for his mistress!' I said to myself. 'And she is safe. … No, it is impossible!' I thought horror-struck. 'There is nothing of the kind, nothing! There are not even any grounds for suspecting such things. Didn't she tell me that the very

thought that I could be jealous of him was degrading to her? Yes, but she is lying, she is always lying!' I exclaimed and everything began anew. … There were only two other people in the carriage; an old woman and her husband, both very taciturn, and even they got out at one of the stations and I was quite alone. I was like a caged animal: now I jumped up and went to the window, now I began to walk up and down trying to speed the carriage up; but the carriage with all its seats and windows went jolting on in the same way, just as ours does. …"

Pózdnyshev jumped up, took a few steps, and sat down again.

"Oh, I am afraid, afraid of railway carriages, I am seized with horror. Yes, it is awful!" he continued. "I said to myself, 'I will think of something else. Suppose I think of the innkeeper where I had tea,' and there in my mind's eye appears the innkeeper with his long beard and his grandson, a boy of the age of my Vásya! 'He will see how the musician kisses his mother. What will happen in his poor soul? But what does she care? She loves …' and again the same thing rose up in me. 'No, no … I will think about the inspection of the District Hospital. Oh, yes, about the patient who complained of the doctor yesterday. The doctor has a moustache like Trukhachévski's. And how impudent he is … they both deceived me when he said he was leaving Moscow,' and it began afresh. Everything I thought of had some connection with them. I suffered dreadfully. The chief cause of the suffering was my ignorance, my doubt, and the contradictions within me: my not knowing whether I ought to love or hate her. My suffering was of a strange kind. I felt a hateful consciousness of my humiliation and of his victory, but a terrible hatred for her. 'It will not do to put an end to myself and leave her; she must at least suffer to some extent, and at least understand that I have suffered,' I said to myself. I got out at every station to divert my mind. At one station I saw some people drinking, and I immediately drank some vodka. Beside me stood a Jew who was also drinking. He began to talk, and to avoid being alone in my carriage I went with him into his dirty third class carriage reeking with smoke and bespattered with shells of sunflower seeds. There I sat down beside him and he chattered a great deal and told anecdotes. I listened to him, but could not take in what he was saying because I continued to think about my own affairs. He noticed this and demanded my attention. Then I rose and went back to my carriage. 'I must think it over,' I said to myself. 'Is what I suspect true, and is there any reason for me to suffer?' I sat down, wishing to think it over calmly, but immediately, instead of calm reflection, the same

thing began again: Instead of reflection, pictures and fancies. 'How often I have suffered like this,' I said to myself (recalling former similar attacks of jealousy), 'and afterwards it all ended in nothing. So it will be now perhaps, yes certainly it will. I shall find her calmly asleep, she will wake up, be pleased to see me, and by her words and looks I shall know that there has been nothing and that this is all nonsense. Oh, how good that would be! But no, that has happened too often and won't happen again now,' some voice seemed to say; and it began again. Yes, that was where the punishment lay! I wouldn't take a young man to a lock-hospital to knock the hankering after women out of him, but into my soul, to see the devils that were rending it! What was terrible, you know, was that I considered myself to have a complete right to her body as if it were my own, and yet at the same time I felt I could not control that body, that it was not mine and she could dispose of it as she pleased, and that she wanted to dispose of it not as I wished her to. And I could do nothing either to her or to him. He, like Vánka the Steward,[20] could sing a song before the gallows of how he kissed the sugared lips and so forth. And he would triumph. If she has not yet done it but wishes to—and I know that she does wish to—it is still worse; it would be better if she had done it and I knew it, so that there would be an end to this uncertainty. I could not have said what it was I wanted. I wanted her not to desire that which she was bound to desire. It was utter insanity.

XXVI

"At the last station but one, when the conductor had been to collect the tickets, I gathered my things together and went out onto the brake platform, and the consciousness that the crisis was at hand still further increased my agitation. I felt cold, and my jaw trembled so that my teeth chattered. I automatically left the terminus with the crowd, took a cab, got in, and drove off. I rode looking at the few passersby, the night watchmen, and the shadows of my trap thrown by the street lamps, now in front and now behind me, and did not think of anything. When we had gone about half a mile my feet felt cold, and I remembered that I had taken off my woollen stockings in the train and put them in my satchel. 'Where is the satchel? Is it here? Yes.' And my

[20] *Vánka the Steward* is the subject and name of some old Russian poems. Vánka seduces his master's wife, boasts of having done so, and is hanged. —*A. M.*

wicker trunk? I remembered that I had entirely forgotten about my luggage, but finding that I had the luggage ticket I decided that it was not worth while going back for it, and so continued my way.

"Try now as I will, I cannot recall my state of mind at the time. What did I think? What did I want? I don't know at all. All I remember is a consciousness that something dreadful and very important in my life was imminent. Whether that important event occurred because I thought it would, or whether I had a presentiment of what was to happen, I don't know. It may even be that after what has happened all the foregoing moments have acquired a certain gloom in my mind. I drove up to the front porch. It was past midnight. Some cabmen were waiting in front of the porch expecting, from the fact that there were lights in the windows, to get fares. (The lights were in our flat, in the dancing room and drawing room.) Without considering why it was still light in our windows so late, I went upstairs in the same state of expectation of something dreadful, and rang. Egór, a kind, willing, but very stupid footman, opened the door. The first thing my eyes fell on in the hall was a man's cloak hanging on the stand with other outdoor coats. I ought to have been surprised but was not, for I had expected it. 'That's it!' I said to myself. When I asked Egór who the visitor was and he named Trukhachévski, I inquired whether there was anyone else. He replied, 'Nobody, sir.' I remember that he replied in a tone as if he wanted to cheer me and dissipate my doubts of there being anybody else there. 'So it is, so it is,' I seemed to be saying to myself. 'And the children?' 'All well, heaven be praised. In bed, long ago.'

"I could not breathe, and could not check the trembling of my jaw. 'Yes, so it is not as I thought: I used to expect a misfortune but things used to turn out all right and in the usual way. Now it is not as usual, but is all as I pictured to myself. I thought it was only fancy, but here it is, all real. Here it all is … !'

"I almost began to sob, but the devil immediately suggested to me: 'Cry, be sentimental, and they will get away quietly. You will have no proof and will continue to suffer and doubt all your life.' And my self-pity immediately vanished, and a strange sense of joy arose in me, that my torture would now be over, that now I could punish her, could get rid of her, and could vent my anger. And I gave vent to it—I became a beast, a cruel and cunning beast.

" 'Don't!' I said to Egór, who was about to go to the drawing room. 'Here is my luggage ticket, take a cab as quick as you can and go and get my luggage. Go!' He went down the passage to fetch his

overcoat. Afraid that he might alarm them, I went as far as his little room and waited while he put on his overcoat. From the drawing room, beyond another room, one could hear voices and the clatter of knives and plates. They were eating and had not heard the bell. 'If only they don't come out now,' thought I. Egór put on his overcoat, which had an astrakhan collar, and went out. I locked the door after him and felt creepy when I knew I was alone and must act at once. How, I did not yet know. I only knew that all was now over, that there could be no doubt as to her guilt, and that I should punish her immediately and end my relations with her.

"Previously I had doubted and had thought: 'Perhaps after all it's not true, perhaps I am mistaken.' But now it was so no longer. It was all irrevocably decided. 'Without my knowledge she is alone with him at night! That is a complete disregard of everything! Or worse still: It is intentional boldness and impudence in crime, that the boldness may serve as a sign of innocence. All is clear. There is no doubt.' I only feared one thing—their parting hastily, inventing some fresh lie, and thus depriving me of clear evidence and of the possibility of proving the fact. So as to catch them more quickly I went on tiptoe to the dancing room where they were, not through the drawing room but through the passage and nurseries.

"In the first nursery slept the boys. In the second nursery the nurse moved and was about to wake, and I imagined to myself what she would think when she knew all; and such pity for myself seized me at that thought that I could not restrain my tears, and not to wake the children I ran on tiptoe into the passage and on into my study, where I fell sobbing on the sofa.

" 'I, an honest man, I, the son of my parent, I, who have all my life dreamt of the happiness of married life; I, a man who was never unfaithful to her. … And now! Five children, and she is embracing a musician because he has red lips!

" 'No, she is not a human being. She is a bitch, an abominable bitch! In the next room to her children whom she has all her life pretended to love. And writing to me as she did! Throwing herself so barefacedly on his neck! But what do I know? Perhaps she long ago carried on with the footmen, and so got the children who are considered mine!

" 'Tomorrow I should have come back and she would have met me with her fine coiffure, with her elegant waist and her indolent, graceful movements' (I saw all her attractive, hateful face), 'and that beast of jealousy would forever have sat in my heart lacerating it. What will the nurse think? … And Egór? And poor little Lisa! She already

understands something. Ah, that imprudence, those lies! And that animal sensuality which I know so well,' I said to myself.

"I tried to get up but could not. My heart was beating so that I could not stand on my feet. 'Yes, I shall die of a stroke. She will kill me. That is just what she wants. What is killing to her? But no, that would be too advantageous for her and I will not give her that pleasure. Yes, here I sit while they eat and laugh and … Yes, though she was no longer in her first freshness he did not disdain her. For in spite of that she is not bad looking, and above all she is at any rate not dangerous to his precious health. And why did I not throttle her then?' I said to myself, recalling the moment when, the week before, I drove her out of my study and hurled things about. I vividly recalled the state I had then been in; I not only recalled it, but again felt the need to strike and destroy that I had felt then. I remember how I wished to act, and how all considerations except those necessary for action went out of my head. I entered into that condition when an animal or a man, under the influence of physical excitement at a time of danger, acts with precision and deliberation but without losing a moment and always with a single definite aim in view.

"The first thing I did was to take off my boots and, in my socks, approach the sofa, on the wall above which guns and daggers were hung. I took down a curved Damascus dagger that had never been used and was very sharp. I drew it out of its scabbard. I remember the scabbard fell behind the sofa, and I remember thinking 'I must find it afterwards or it will get lost.' Then I took off my overcoat which was still wearing, and stepping softly in my socks I went there.

XXVII

"Having crept up stealthily to the door, I suddenly opened it. I remember the expression of their faces. I remember that expression because it gave me a painful pleasure—it was an expression of terror. That was just what I wanted. I shall never forget the look of desperate terror that appeared on both their faces the first instant they saw me. He I think was sitting at the table, but on seeing or hearing me he jumped to his feet and stood with his back to the cupboard. His face expressed nothing but quite unmistakable terror. Her face too expressed terror but there was something else besides. If it had expressed only terror, perhaps what happened might not have happened; but on her face there was, or at any rate so it seemed to me at the first moment, also

an expression of regret and annoyance that love's raptures and her happiness with him had been disturbed. It was as if she wanted nothing but that her present happiness should not be interfered with. These expressions remained on their faces but an instant. The look of terror on his changed immediately to one of inquiry; might he, or might he not, begin lying? If he might, he must begin at once; if not, something else would happen. But what? … He looked inquiringly at her face. On her face the look of vexation and regret changed as she looked at him (so it seemed to me) to one of solicitude for him.

"For an instant I stood in the doorway holding the dagger behind my back.

"At that moment he smiled, and in a ridiculously indifferent tone remarked: 'And we have been having some music.'

" 'What a surprise!' she began, falling into his tone. But neither of them finished; the same fury I had experienced the week before overcame me. Again I felt that need of destruction, violence, and a transport of rage, and yielded to it. Neither finished what they were saying. That something else began which he had feared and which immediately destroyed all they were saying. I rushed towards her, still hiding the dagger that he might not prevent my striking her in the side under her breast. I selected that spot from the first. Just as I rushed at her he saw it, and—a thing I never expected of him—seized me by the arm and shouted: 'Think what you are doing! … Help, someone! …'

"I snatched my arm away and rushed at him in silence. His eyes met mine and he suddenly grew as pale as a sheet to his very lips. His eyes flashed in a peculiar way, and—what again I had not expected—he darted under the piano and out at the door. I was going to rush after him, but a weight hung on my left arm. It was she. I tried to free myself, but she hung on yet more heavily and would not let me go. This unexpected hindrance, the weight, and her touch which was loathsome to me, inflamed me still more. I felt that I was quite mad and that I must look frightful, and this delighted me. I swung my left arm with all my might, and my elbow hit her straight in the face. She cried out and let go my arm. I wanted to run after him, but remembered that it is ridiculous to run after one's wife's lover in one's socks; and I did not wish to be ridiculous but terrible. In spite of the fearful frenzy I was in, I was all the time aware of the impression I might produce on others, and was even partly guided by that impression. I turned towards her. She fell on the couch, and holding her hand to her bruised eyes, looked at me. Her face showed fear and hatred of me, the enemy, as a rat's does when one lifts the trap in which it has been caught. At

any rate I saw nothing in her expression but this fear and hatred of me. It was just the fear and hatred of me which would be evoked by love for another. But still I might perhaps have restrained myself and not done what I did had she remained silent. But she suddenly began to speak and to catch hold of the hand in which I held the dagger.

" 'Come to yourself! What are you doing? What is the matter? There has been nothing, nothing, nothing. … I swear it!'

"I might still have hesitated, but those last words of hers, from which I concluded just the opposite—that everything had happened—called forth a reply. And the reply had to correspond to the temper to which I had brought myself, which continued to increase and had to go on increasing. Fury, too, has its laws.

" 'Don't lie, you wretch!' I howled, and seized her arm with my left hand, but she wrenched herself away. Then, still without letting go of the dagger, I seized her by the throat with my left hand, threw her backwards, and began throttling her. What a firm neck it was … ! She seized my hand with both hers trying to pull it away from her throat, and as if I had only waited for that, I struck her with all my might with the dagger in the side below the ribs.

"When people say they don't remember what they do in a fit of fury, it is rubbish, falsehood. I remembered everything and did not for a moment lose consciousness of what I was doing. The more frenzied I became the more brightly the light of consciousness burnt in me, so that I could not help knowing everything I did. I knew what I was doing every second. I cannot say that I knew beforehand what I was going to do; but I knew what I was doing when I did it, and even I think a little before, as if to make repentance possible and to be able to tell myself that I could stop. I knew I was hitting below the ribs and that the dagger would enter. At the moment I did it I knew I was doing an awful thing such as I had never done before, which would have terrible consequences. But that consciousness passed like a flash of lightning and the deed immediately followed the consciousness. I realized the action with the extraordinary clearness. I felt, and remember, the momentary resistance of her corset and of something else, and then the plunging of the dagger into something soft. She seized the dagger with her hands, and cut them, but could not hold it back.

"For a long time afterwards, in prison when the moral change had taken place in me, I thought of that moment, recalled what I could of it, and considered it. I remembered that for an instant, only an instant, before the action I had a terrible consciousness that I was killing, had killed, a defenceless woman, my wife! I remember the horror of that

consciousness and conclude from that, and even dimly remember, that having plunged the dagger in I pulled it out immediately, trying to remedy what had been done and to stop it. I stood for a second motionless waiting to see what would happen, and whether it could be remedied.

"She jumped to her feet and screamed: 'Nurse! He has killed me.'

"Having heard the noise the nurse was standing by the door. I continued to stand waiting, and not believing the truth. But the blood rushed from under her corset. Only then did I understand that it could not be remedied, and I immediately decided that it was not necessary it should be, that I had done what I wanted and had to do. I waited till she fell down, and the nurse, crying 'Good God!' ran to her, and only then did I throw away the dagger and leave the room.

" 'I must not be excited; I must know what I am doing,' I said to myself without looking at her and at the nurse. The nurse was screaming—calling for the maid. I went down the passage, sent the maid, and went into my study. 'What am I to do now?' I asked myself, and immediately realized what it must be. On entering the study I went straight to the wall, took down a revolver and examined it—it was loaded—I put it on the table. Then I picked up the scabbard from behind the sofa and sat down there.

"I sat thus for a long time. I did not think of anything or call anything to mind. I heard the sounds of bustling outside. I heard someone drive up, then someone else. Then I heard and saw Egór bring into the room my wicker trunk he had fetched. As if anyone wanted that!

" 'Have you heard what has happened?' I asked. 'Tell the yard porter to inform the police.' He did not reply, and went away. I rose, locked the door, got out my cigarettes and matches and began to smoke. I had not finished the cigarette before sleep overpowered me. I must have slept for a couple of hours. I remember dreaming that she and I were friendly together, that we had quarrelled but were making it up, there was something rather in the way, but we were friends. I was awakened by someone knocking at the door. 'That is the police!' I thought, waking up. 'I have committed murder, I think. But perhaps it is *she*, and nothing has happened.' There was again a knock at the door. I did not answer, but was trying to solve the question whether it had happened or not. Yet, it had! I remembered the resistance of the corset and the plunging in of the dagger, and a cold shiver ran down my back. 'Yes, it has. Yes, and now I must do away with myself too,' I thought. But I thought this knowing that I should *not* kill myself.

Still I got up and took the revolver in my hand. But it is strange: I remember how I had many times been near suicide, how even that day on the railway it had seemed easy, only just because I thought how it would stagger her—now I was not only unable to kill myself but even to think of it. 'Why should I do it?' I asked myself, and there was no reply. There was more knocking at the door. 'First I must find out who is knocking. There will still be time for this.' I put down the revolver and covered it with a newspaper. I went to the door and unlatched it. It was my wife's sister, a kindly, stupid widow. 'Vásya, what is this?' and her ever ready tears began to flow.

" 'What do you want?' I asked rudely. I knew I ought not to be rude to her and had no reason to be, but I could think of no other tone to adopt.

" 'Vásya, she is dying! Iván Zakhárych says so.' Iván Zakhárych was her doctor and adviser.

" 'Is he here?' I asked, and all my animosity against surged up again. 'Well, what of it?'

" 'Vásya, go to her. Oh, how terrible it is!' said she.

" 'Shall I go to her?' I asked myself, and immediately decided that I must go to her. Probably it is always done, when a husband has killed his wife, as I had—he must certainly go to her. 'If that is what is done, then I must go,' I said to myself. 'If necessary I shall always have time,' I reflected, referring to the shooting of myself, and I went to her. 'Now we shall have phrases, grimaces, but I will not yield to them,' I thought. 'Wait,' I said to her sister, 'it is silly without boots, let me at least put on slippers.'

XXVIII

"Wonderful to say, when I left my study and went through the familiar rooms, the hope that nothing had happened again awoke in me; but the smell of that doctor's nastiness—iodoform and carbolic—took me aback. 'No, it had happened.' Going down the passage past the nursery I saw little Lisa. She looked at me with frightened eyes. It even seemed to me that all the five children were there and all looked at me. I approached the door, and the maid opened it from inside for me and passed out. The first thing that caught my eye was her light-grey dress thrown on a chair and all stained black with blood. She was lying on one of the twin beds (on mine because it was easier to get at), with her knees raised. She say in a very sloping position supported by pillows,

with her dressing jacket unfastened. Something had been put on the wound. There was a heavy smell of iodoform in the room. What struck me first and most of all was her swollen and bruised face, blue on part of the nose and under the eyes. This was the result of the blow with my elbow when she had tried to hold me back. There was nothing beautiful about her, but something repulsive as it seemed to me. I stopped on the threshold. 'Go up to her, do,' said her sister. 'Yes, no doubt she wants to confess,' I thought. 'Shall I forgive her? Yes, she is dying and may be forgiven,' I thought, trying to be magnanimous. I went up close to her. She raised her eyes to me with difficulty, one of them was black, and with an effort said falteringly:

" 'You've got your way, killed …' and through the look of suffering and even the nearness of death her face had the old expression of cold animal hatred that I knew so well. 'I shan't … let you have … the children, all the same. … She' (her sister) 'will take …'

"Of what to me was the most important matter, her guilt, her faithlessness, she seemed to consider it beneath her to speak.

" 'Yes, look and admire what you have done,' she said looking towards the door, and she sobbed. In the doorway stood her sister with the children. 'Yes, see what you have done.'

"I looked at the children and at her bruised and disfigured face, and for the first time I forgot myself, my rights, my pride, and for the first time saw a human being in her. And so insignificant did all that had offended me, all my jealousy, appear, and so important what I had done, that I wished to fall with my face to her hand, and say: 'Forgive me,' but dared not do so.

"She lay silent with her eyes closed, evidently too weak to say more. Then her disfigured face trembled and puckered. She pushed me feebly away.

" 'Why did it all happen? Why?'

" 'Forgive me,' I said.

" 'Forgive! That's all rubbish! … only not to die! …' she cried, raising herself, and her glittering eyes were bent on me. 'Yes, you have had your way! … I hate you! Ah! Ah!' she cried, evidently already in delirium and frightened at something. 'Shoot! I'm not afraid! … Only kill everyone … ! He has gone … ! Gone … !'

"After that the delirium continued all the time. She did not recognize anyone. She died towards noon that same day. Before that they had taken me to the police station and from there to prison. There, during the eleven months I remained awaiting trial, I examined myself and my past, and understood it. I began to understand it on the third

day: on the third day they took me *there* …"

He was going on but, unable to repress his sobs, he stopped. When he recovered himself he continued:

"I only began to understand when I saw her in her coffin …"

He gave a sob, but immediately continued hurriedly:

"Only when I saw her dead face did I understand all that I had done. I realized that I, I, had killed her; that it was my doing that she, living, moving, warm, had now become motionless, waxen, and cold, and that this could never, anywhere, or by any means, be remedied. He who has not lived through it cannot understand. … Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! …" he cried several times and then was silent.

We sat in silence a long while. He kept sobbing and trembling as he sat opposite me without speaking. His face had grown narrow and elongated and his mouth seemed to stretch right across it. "Yes," he suddenly said. "Had I then known what I know now, everything would have been different. Nothing would have induced me to marry her. … I should not have married at all."

Again we remained silent for a long time.

"Well, forgive me. …"[21] He turned away from me and lay down on the seat, covering himself up with his plaid. At the station where I had to get out (it was at eight o'clock in the morning) I went up to him to say goodbye. Whether he was asleep or only pretended to be, at any rate he did not move. I touched him with my hand. He uncovered his face, and I could see he had not been asleep.

"Goodbye," I said, holding out my hand. He gave me his and smiled slightly, but so piteously that I felt ready to weep.

"Yes, forgive me …" he said, repeating the same words with which he had concluded his story.

The Devil

> But I say unto you, that everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.
>
> And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one

[21] In Russian the word for "forgive me" is very similar to that for "goodbye," and is sometimes used in place of the latter. —*A. M.*

> of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.
>
> And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell.

I

A brilliant career lay before Eugène Irténev. He had everything necessary to attain it: an admirable education at home, high honours when he graduated in law at Petersburg University, and connections in the highest society through his recently deceased father; he had also already begun service in one of the Ministries under the protection of the minister. Moreover he had a fortune; even a large one, though insecure. His father had lived abroad and in Petersburg, allowing his sons, Eugène and Andrew (who was older than Eugène and in the Horse Guards), six thousand rubles a year each, while he himself and his wife spent a great deal. He only used to visit his estate for a couple of months in summer and did not concern himself with its direction, entrusting it all to an unscrupulous manager who also failed to attend to it, but in whom he had complete confidence.

After the father's death, when the brothers began to divide the property, so many debts were discovered that their lawyer even advised them to refuse the inheritance and retain only an estate left them by their grandmother, which was valued at a hundred thousand rubles. But a neighbouring landed-proprietor who had done business with old Irténev, that is to say, who had promissory notes from him and had come to Petersburg on that account, said that in spite of the debts they could straighten out affairs so as to retain a large fortune (it would only be necessary to sell the forest and some outlying land, retaining the rich Semënov estate with four thousand desyatins of black earth, the sugar factory, and two hundred desyatins of water-meadows) if one devoted oneself to the management of the estate, settled there, and farmed it wisely and economically.

And so, having visited the estate in spring (his father had died in Lent), Eugène looked into everything, resolved to retire from the Civil Service, settle in the country with his mother, and undertake the management with the object of preserving the main estate. He

arranged with his brother, with whom he was very friendly, that he would pay him either four thousand rubles a year, or a lump sum of eighty thousand, for which Andrew would hand over to him his share of his inheritance.

So he arranged matters and, having settled down with his mother in the big house, began managing the estate eagerly, yet cautiously.

It is generally supposed the Conservatives are usually old people, and that those in favour of change are the young. That is not quite correct. Usually Conservatives are young people: those who want to live but who do not think about how to live, and have not time to think, and therefore take as a model for themselves a way of life that they have seen.

Thus it was with Eugène. Having settled in the village, his aim and ideal was to restore the form of life that had existed, not in his father's time—his father had been a bad manager—but in his grandfather's. And now he tried to resurrect the general spirit of his grandfather's life—in the house, the garden, and in the estate management—of course with changes suited to the times—everything on a large scale—good order, method, and everybody satisfied. But to do this entailed much work. It was necessary to meet the demands of the creditors and the banks, and for that purpose to sell some land and arrange renewals of credit. It was also necessary to get money to carry on (partly by farming out land, and partly by hiring labour) the immense operations on the Semënov estate, with its four hundred desyatins of ploughland and its sugar factory, and to deal with the garden so that it should not seem to be neglected or in decay.

There was much work to do, but Eugène had plenty of strength—physical and mental. He was twenty-six, of medium height, strongly built, with muscles developed by gymnastics. He was fullblooded and his whole neck was very red, his teeth and lips were bright, and his hair soft and curly though not thick. His only physical defect was shortsightedness, which he had himself developed by using spectacles, so that he could not now do without a pince-nez, which had already formed a line on the bridge of his nose.

Such was his physically. For his spiritual portrait it might be said that the better people knew him the better they liked him. His mother had always loved him more than anyone else, and now after her husband's death she concentrated on him not only her whole affection but her whole life. Nor was it only his mother who so loved him. All his comrades at the high school and the university not merely liked him very much, but respected him. He had this effect on all who met him.

It was impossible not to believe what he said, impossible to suspect any deception or falseness in one who had such an open, honest face and in particular such eyes.

In general his personality helped him much in his affairs. A creditor who would have refused another trusted him. The clerk, the village Elder, or a peasant, who would have played a dirty trick and cheated someone else, forgot to deceive under the pleasant impression of intercourse with this kindly, agreeable, and above all candid man.

It was the end of May. Eugène had somehow managed in town to get the vacant land freed from the mortgage, so as to sell it to a merchant, and had borrowed money from that same merchant to replenish his stock, that is to say, to procure horses, bulls, and carts, and in particular to begin to build a necessary farmhouse. The matter had been arranged. The timber was being carted, the carpenters were already at work, and manure for the estate was being brought on eighty carts, but everything still hung by a thread.

II

Amid these cares something came about which though unimportant tormented Eugène at the time. As a young man he had lived as all healthy young men live, that is, he had had relations with women of various kinds. He was not a libertine but neither, as he himself said, was he a monk. He only turned to this, however, in so far as was necessary for physical health and to have his mind free, as he used to say. This had begun when he was sixteen and had gone on satisfactorily—in the sense that he had never given himself up to debauchery, never once been infatuated, and had never contracted a disease. At first he had a seamstress in Petersburg, then she got spoilt and he made other arrangements, and that side of his affairs was so well secured that it did not trouble him.

But now he was living in the country for the second month and did not at all know what he was to do. Compulsory self-restraint was beginning to have a bad effect on him.

Must he really go to town for that purpose? And where to? How? That was the only thing that disturbed him; but as he was convinced that the thing was necessary and that he needed it, it really became a necessity, and he felt that he was not free and that his eyes involuntarily followed every young woman.

He did not approve of having relations with a married woman or

a maid in his own village. He knew by report that both his father and grandfather had been quite different in this matter from other landowners of that time. At home they had never had any entanglements with peasant-women, and he had decided that he would not do so either; but afterwards, feeling himself ever more and more under compulsion and imagining with horror what might happen to him in the neighbouring country town, and reflecting on the fact that the days of serfdom were now over, he decided that it might be done on the spot. Only it must be done so that no one should know of it, and not for the sake of debauchery but merely for health's sake—as he said to himself. And when he had decided this he became still more restless. When talking to the village Elder, the peasants, or the carpenters, he involuntarily brought the conversation round to women, and when it turned to women he kept it on that theme. He noticed the women more and more.

III

To settle the matter in his own mind was one thing but to carry it out was another. To approach a woman himself was impossible. Which one? Where? It must be done through someone else, but to whom should he speak about it?

He happened to go into a watchman's hut in the forest to get a drink of water. The watchman had been his father's huntsman, and Eugène Ivánich chatted with him, and the man began telling some strange tales of hunting sprees. It occurred to Eugène Ivánich that it would be convenient to arrange matters in this hut, or in the wood, only he did not know how to manage it and whether old Daniel would undertake the arrangement. "Perhaps he will be horrified at such a proposal and I shall have disgraced myself, but perhaps he will agree to it quite simply." So he thought while listening to Daniel's stories. Daniel was telling how once when they had been stopping at the hut of the sexton's wife in an outlying field, he had brought a woman for Fëdor Zakhárich Pryánishnikov.

"It will be all right," thought Eugène.

"Your father, may the kingdom of heaven be his, did not go in for nonsense of that kind."

"It won't do," thought Eugène. But to test the matter he said: "How was it you engaged on such bad things?"

"But what was there bad in it? She was glad, and Fëdor Zakhárich

was satisfied, very satisfied. I got a ruble. Why, what was he to do? He too is a lively limb apparently, and drinks wine."

"Yes, I may speak," thought Eugène, and at once proceeded to do so.

"And do you know, Daniel, I don't know how to endure it,"—he felt himself going scarlet.

Daniel smiled.

"I am not a monk—I have been accustomed to it."

He felt that what he was saying was stupid, but was glad to see that Daniel approved.

"Why of course, you should have told me long ago. It can all be arranged," said he: "only tell me which one you want."

"Oh, it is really all the same to me. Of course not an ugly one, and she must be healthy."

"I understand!" said Daniel briefly. He reflected.

"Ah! There is a tasty morsel," he began. Again Eugène went red. "A tasty morsel. See here, she was married last autumn." Daniel whispered—"and he hasn't been able to do anything. Think what that is worth to one who wants it!"

Eugène even frowned with shame.

"No, no," he said. "I don't want that at all. I want, on the contrary (what could the contrary be?), on the contrary I only want that she should be healthy and that there should be as little fuss as possible—a woman whose husband is away in the army or something of that kind."

"I know. It's Stepanída I must bring you. Her husband is away in town, just the same as a soldier. And she is a fine woman, and clean. You will be satisfied. As it is I was saying to her the other day—you should go, but she …"

"Well then, when is it to be?"

"Tomorrow if you like. I shall be going to get some tobacco and I will call in, and at the dinner-hour come here, or to the bathhouse behind the kitchen garden. There will be nobody about. Besides after dinner everybody takes a nap."

"All right then."

A terrible excitement seized Eugène as he rode home. "What will happen? What is a peasant-woman like? Suppose it turns out that she is hideous, horrible? No, she is handsome," he told himself, remembering some he had been noticing. "But what shall I say? What shall I do?"

He was not himself all that day. Next day at noon he went to the forester's hut. Daniel stood at the door and silently and significantly

nodded towards the wood. The blood rushed to Eugène's heart, he was conscious of it and went to the kitchen garden. No one was there. He went to the bathhouse—there was no one about, he looked in, came out, and suddenly heard the crackling of a breaking twig. He looked round—and she was standing in the thicket beyond the little ravine. He rushed there across the ravine. There were nettles in it which he had not noticed. They stung him and, losing the pince-nez from his nose, he ran up the slope on the farther side. She stood there, in a white embroidered apron, a red-brown skirt, and a bright red kerchief, barefoot, fresh, firm, and handsome, and smiling shyly.

"There is a path leading round—you should have gone round," she said. "I came long ago, ever so long."

He went up to her and, looking her over, touched her.

A quarter of an hour later they separated; he found his pince-nez, called in to see Daniel, and in reply to his question: "Are you satisfied, master?" gave him a ruble and went home.

He was satisfied. Only at first had he felt ashamed, then it had passed off. And everything had gone well. The best thing was that he now felt at ease, tranquil and vigorous. As for her, he had not even seen her thoroughly. He remembered that she was clean, fresh, not bad-looking, and simple, without any pretence. "Whose wife is she?" said he to himself. "Péchnikov's, Daniel said. What Péchnikov is that? There are two households of that name. Probably she is old Michael's daughter-in-law. Yes, that must be it. His son does live in Moscow. I'll ask Daniel about it some time."

From then onward that previously important drawback to country life—enforced self-restraint—was eliminated. Eugène's freedom of mind was no longer disturbed and he was able to attend freely to his affairs.

And the matter Eugène had undertaken was far from easy: before he had time to stop up one hole a new one would unexpectedly show itself, and it sometimes seemed to him that he would not be able to go through with it and that it would end in his having to sell the estate after all, which would mean that all his efforts would be wasted and that he had failed to accomplish what he had undertaken. That prospect disturbed him most of all.

All this time more and more debts of his father's unexpectedly came to light. It was evident that towards the end of his life he had borrowed right and left. At the time of the settlement in May, Eugène had thought he at least knew everything, but in the middle of the summer he suddenly received a letter from which it appeared that

there was still a debt of twelve thousand rubles to the widow Esípova. There was no promissory note, but only an ordinary receipt which his lawyer told him could be disputed. But it did not enter Eugène's head to refuse to pay a debt of his father's merely because the document could be challenged. He only wanted to know for certain whether there had been such a debt.

"Mamma! Who is Kalériya Vladímirovna Esípova?" he asked his mother when they met as usual for dinner.

"Esípova? She was brought up by your grandfather. Why?"

Eugène told his mother about the letter.

"I wonder she is not ashamed to ask for it. Your father gave her so much!"

"But do we owe her this?"

"Well now, how shall I put it? It is not a debt. Papa, out of his unbounded kindness …"

"Yes, but did Papa consider it a debt?"

"I cannot say. I don't know. I only know it is hard enough for you without that."

Eugène saw that Mary Pávlovna did not know what to say, and was as it were sounding him.

"I see from what you say that it must be paid," said he. "I will go to see her tomorrow and have a chat, and see if it cannot be deferred."

"Ah, how sorry I am for you, but you know that will be best. Tell her she must wait," said Mary Pávlovna, evidently tranquillized and proud of her son's decision.

Eugène's position was particularly hard because his mother, who was living with him, did not at all realize his position. She had been accustomed all her life long to live extravagantly that she could not even imagine to herself the position her son was in, that is to say, that today or tomorrow matters might shape themselves so that they would have nothing left and he would have to sell everything and live and support his mother on what salary he could earn, which at the very most would be two thousand rubles. She did not understand that they could only save themselves from that position by cutting down expense in everything, and so she could not understand why Eugène was so careful about trifles, in expenditure on gardeners, coachmen, servants—even on food. Also, like most widows, she nourished feelings of devotion to the memory of her departed spouse quite different from those she had felt for him while he lived, and she did not admit the thought that anything the departed had done or arranged could be wrong or could be altered.

Eugène by great efforts managed to keep up the garden and the conservatory with two gardeners, and the stables with two coachmen. And Mary Pávlovna naively thought that she was sacrificing herself for her son and doing all a mother could do, by not complaining of the food which the old man-cook prepared, of the fact that the paths in the park were not all swept clean, and that instead of footmen they had only a boy.

So, too, concerning this new debt, in which Eugène saw an almost crushing blow to all his undertakings, Mary Pávlovna only saw an incident displaying Eugène's noble nature. Moreover she did not feel much anxiety about Eugène's position, because she was confident that he would make a brilliant marriage which would put everything right. And he could make a very brilliant marriage: she knew a dozen families who would be glad to give their daughters to him. And she wished to arrange the matter as soon as possible.

IV

Eugène himself dreamt of marriage, but not in the same way as his mother. The idea of using marriage as a means of putting his affairs in order was repulsive to him. He wished to marry honourably, for love. He observed the girls whom he met and those he knew, and compared himself with them, but no decision had yet been taken. Meanwhile, contrary to his expectations, his relations with Stepanída continued, and even acquired the character of a settled affair. Eugène was so far from debauchery, it was so hard for him secretly to do this thing which he felt to be bad, that he could not arrange these meetings himself and even after the first one hoped not to see Stepanída again; but it turned out that after some time the same restlessness (due he believed to that cause) again overcame him. And his restlessness this time was no longer impersonal, but suggested just those same bright, black eyes, and that deep voice, saying, "ever so long," that same scent of something fresh and strong, and that same full breast lifting the bib of her apron, and all this in that hazel and maple thicket, bathed in bright sunlight.

Though he felt ashamed he again approached Daniel. And again a rendezvous was fixed for midday in the wood. This time Eugène looked her over more carefully and everything about her seemed attractive. He tried talking to her and asked about her husband. He really was Michael's son and lived as a coachman in Moscow.

"Well, then, how is it you …" Eugène wanted to ask how it was she was untrue to him.

"What about 'how is it'?" asked she. Evidently she was clever and quick-witted.

"Well, how is it you come to me?"

"There now," said she merrily. "I bet he goes on the spree there. Why shouldn't I?"

Evidently she was putting on an air of sauciness and assurance, and this seemed charming to Eugène. But all the same he did not himself fix a rendezvous with her. Even when she proposed that they should meet without the aid of Daniel, to whom she seemed not very well disposed, he did not consent. He hoped that this meeting would be the last. He liked her. He thought such intercourse was necessary for him and that there was nothing bad about it, but in the depth of his soul there was a stricter judge who did not approve of it and hoped that this would be the last time, or if he did not hope that, at any rate did not wish to participate in arrangements to repeat it another time.

So the whole summer passed, during which they met a dozen times and always by Daniel's help. It happened once that she could not be there because her husband had come home, and Daniel proposed another woman, but Eugène refused with disgust. Then the husband went away and the meetings continued as before, at first through Daniel, but afterwards he simply fixed the time and she came with another woman, Prókhorova—as it would not do for a peasant-woman to go about alone.

Once at the very time fixed for the rendezvous a family came to call on Mary Pávlovna, with the very girl she wished Eugène to marry, and it was impossible for Eugène to get away. As soon as he could do so, he went out as though to the thrashing-floor, and round by the path to their meeting place in the wood. She was not there, but at the accustomed spot everything within reach had been broken—the black alder, the hazel-twigs, and even a young maple the thickness of a stake. She had waited, had become excited and angry, and had skittishly left him a remembrance. He waited and waited, and then went to Daniel to ask him to call her for tomorrow. She came and was just as usual.

So the summer passed. The meetings ere always arranged in the wood, and only once, when it grew towards autumn, in the shed that stood in her backyard.

It did not enter Eugène's head that these relations of his had any importance for him. About her he did not even think. He gave her money and nothing more. At first he did not know and did not think

that the affair was known and that she was envied throughout the village, or that her relations took money from her and encouraged her, and that her conception of any sin in the matter had been quite obliterated by the influence of the money and her family's approval. It seemed to her that if people envied her, then what she was doing was good.

"It is simply necessary for my health," thought Eugène. "I grant it is not right, and though no one says anything, everybody, or many people, know of it. The woman who comes with her knows. And once she knows she is sure to have told others. But what's to be done? I am acting badly," thought Eugène, "but what's one to do? Anyhow it is not for long."

What chiefly disturbed Eugène was the thought of the husband. At first for some reason it seemed to him that the husband must be a poor sort, and this as it were partly justified his conduct. But he saw the husband and was struck by his appearance: he was a fine fellow and smartly dressed, in no way a worse man than himself, but surely better. At their next meeting he told her he had seen her husband and had been surprised to see that he was such a fine fellow.

"There's not another man like him in the village," said she proudly.

This surprised Eugène, and the thought of the husband tormented him still more after that. He happened to be at Daniel's one day and Daniel, having begun chatting said to him quite openly:

"And Michael asked me the other day: 'Is it true that the master is living with my wife?' I said I did not know. 'Anyway,' I said, 'better with the master than with a peasant.' "

"Well, and what did he say?"

"He said: 'Wait a bit. I'll get to know and I'll give it her all the same.' "

"Yes, if the husband returned to live here I would give her up," thought Eugène.

But the husband lived in town and for the present their intercourse continued.

"When necessary I will break it off, and there will be nothing left of it," thought he.

And this seemed to him certain, especially as during the whole summer many different things occupied him very fully: the erection of the new farmhouse, and the harvest and building, and above all meeting the debts and selling the wasteland. All these were affairs that completely absorbed him and on which he spent his thoughts when he lay down and when he got up. All that was real life. His

intercourse—he did not even call it connection—with Stepanída he paid no attention to. It is true that when the wish to see her arose it came with such strength that he could think of nothing else. But this did not last long. A meeting was arranged, and he again forgot her for a week or even for a month.

In autumn Eugène often rode to town, and there became friendly with the Ánnenskis. They had a daughter who had just finished the Institute.[22] And then, to Mary Pávlovna's great grief, it happened that Eugène "cheapened himself," as she expressed it, by falling in love with Liza Ánnenskaya and proposing to her.

From that time his relations with Stepanída ceased.

V

It is impossible to explain why Eugène chose Liza Ánnenskaya, as it is always impossible to explain why a man chooses this and not that woman. There were many reasons—positive and negative. One reason was that she was not a very rich heiress such as his mother sought for him, another that she was naive and to be pitied in her relations with her mother, another that she was not a beauty who attracted general attention to herself, and yet she was not bad-looking. But the chief reason was that his acquaintance with her began at the time when he was ripe for marriage. He fell in love because he knew that he would marry.

Liza Ánnenskaya was at first merely pleasing to Eugène, but when he decided to make her his wife his feelings for her became much stronger. He felt that he was in love.

Liza was tall, slender, and long. Everything about her was long; her face, and her nose (not prominently but downwards), and her fingers, and her feet. The colour of her face was very delicate, creamy white and delicately pink; she had long, soft, and curly, light-brown hair, and beautiful eyes, clear, mild, and confiding. Those eyes especially struck Eugène, and when he thought of Liza he always saw those clear, mild, confiding eyes.

Such was she physically; he knew nothing of her spiritually, but only saw those eyes. And those eyes seemed to tell him all he needed to know. The meaning of their expression was this:

[22] The Institute was a boarding-school for the daughters of the nobility and gentry, in which great attention was paid to the manners and accomplishments of the pupils. —*A. M.*

While still in the Institute, when she was fifteen, Liza used continually to fall in love with all the attractive men she met and was animated and happy only when she was in love. After leaving the Institute she continued to fall in love in just the same way with all the young men she met, and of course fell in love with Eugène as soon as she made his acquaintance. It was this being in love which gave her eyes that particular expression which so captivated Eugène. Already that winter she had been in love with two young men at one and the same time, and blushed and became excited not only when they entered the room but whenever their names were mentioned. But afterwards, when her mother hinted to her that Irténev seemed to have serious intentions, her love for him increased so that she became almost indifferent to the two previous attractions, and when Irténev began to come to their balls and parties and danced with her more than with others and evidently only wished to know whether she loved him, her love for him became painful. She dreamed of him in her sleep and seemed to see him when she was awake in a dark room, and everyone else vanished from her mind. But when he proposed and they were formally engaged, and when they had kissed one another and were a betrothed couple, then she had no thoughts but of him, no desire but to be with him, to love him, and to be loved by him. She was also proud of him and felt emotional about him and herself and her love, and quite melted and felt faint from love of him.

The more he got to know her the more he loved her. He had not at all expected to find such love, and it strengthened his own feeling more.

VI

Towards spring he went to his estate at Semënovskoe to have a look at it and to give directions about the management, and especially about the house which was being done up for his wedding.

Mary Pávlovna was dissatisfied with her son's choice, not only because the match was not as brilliant as it might have been, but also because she did not like Varvára Alexéevna, his future mother-in-law. Whether she was good-natured or not she did not know and could not decide, but that she was not well-bred, not comme il faut—"not a lady" as Mary Pávlovna said to herself—she saw from their first acquaintance, and this distressed her; distressed her because she was accustomed to value breeding and knew that Eugène was sensitive to

it, and she foresaw that he would suffer much annoyance on this account. But she liked the girl. Liked her chiefly because Eugène did. One could not help loving her, and Mary Pávlovna was quite sincerely ready to do so.

Eugène found his mother contented and in good spirits. She was getting everything straight in the house and preparing to go away herself as soon as he brought his young wife. Eugène persuaded her to stay for the time being, and the future remained undecided.

In the evening after tea Mary Pávlovna played patience as usual. Eugène sat by, helping her. This was the hour of their most intimate talks. Having finished one game and while preparing to begin another, she looked up at him and, with a little hesitation, began thus:

"I wanted to tell you, Jénya—of course I do not know, but in general I wanted to suggest to you—that before your wedding it is absolutely necessary to have finished with all your bachelor affairs so that nothing may disturb either you or your wife. God forbid that it should. You understand me?"

And indeed Eugène at once understood that Mary Pávlovna was hinting at his relations with Stepanída which had ended in the previous autumn, and that she attributed much more importance to those relations than they deserved, as solitary women always do. Eugène blushed, not from shame so much as from vexation that good-natured Mary Pávlovna was bothering—out of affection no doubt, but still was bothering—about matters that were not her business and that she did not and could not understand. He answered that there was nothing that needed concealment, and that he had always conducted himself so that there should be nothing to hinder his marrying.

"Well, dear, that is excellent. Only, Jénya … don't be vexed with me," said Mary Pávlovna, and broke off in confusion.

Eugène saw that she had not finished and had not said what she wanted to. And this was confirmed, when a little later she began to tell him how, in his absence, she had been asked to stand godmother at … the Péchnikovs.

Eugène flushed again, not with vexation or shame this time, but with some strange consciousness of the importance of what was about to be told him—an involuntary consciousness quite at variance with his conclusions. And what he expected happened. Mary Pávlovna, as if merely by way of conversation, mentioned that this year only boys were being born—evidently a sign of a coming war. Both at the Vásins and the Péchnikovs the young wife had a first child—at each house a boy. Mary Pávlovna wanted to say this casually, but she herself felt

ashamed when she saw the colour mount to her son's face and saw him nervously removing, tapping, and replacing his pince-nez and hurriedly lighting a cigarette. She became silent. He too was silent and could not think how to break that silence. So they both understood that they had understood one another.

"Yes, the chief thing is that there should be justice and no favouritism in the village—as under your grandfather."

"Mamma," said Eugène suddenly, "I know why you are saying this. You have no need to be disturbed. My future family life is so sacred to me that I should not infringe it in any case. And as to what occurred in my bachelor days, that is quite ended. I never formed any union and on one has any claims on me."

"Well, I am glad," said his mother. "I know how noble your feelings are."

Eugène accepted his mother's words as a tribute due to him, and did not reply.

Next day he drove to town thinking of his fiancée and of anything in the world except of Stepanída. But, as if purposely to remind him, on approaching the church he met people walking and driving back from it. He met old Matvéy with Simon, some lads and girls, and then two women, one elderly, the other, who seemed familiar, smartly dressed and wearing a bright-red kerchief. This woman was walking lightly and boldly, carrying a child in her arms. He came up to them, and the elder woman bowed, stopping in the old-fashioned way, but the young woman with the child only bent her head, and from under the kerchief gleamed familiar, merry, smiling eyes.

Yes, this was she, but all that was over and it was no use looking at her: "and the child may be mine," flashed through his mind. No, what nonsense! There was her husband, she used to see him. He did not even consider the matter further, so settled in his mind was it that it had been necessary for his health—he had paid her money and there was no more to be said; there was, there had been, and there could be, no question of any union between them. It was not that he stifled the voice of conscience, no—his conscience simply said nothing to him. And he thought no more about her after the conversation with his mother and this meeting. Nor did he meet her again.

Eugène was married in town the week after Easter, and left at once with his young wife for his country estate. The house had been arranged as usual for a young couple. Mary Pávlovna wished to leave, but Eugène begged her to remain, and Liza still more strongly, and she only moved into a detached wing of the house.

And so a new life began for Eugène.

VII

The first year of his marriage was a hard one for Eugène. It was hard because affairs he had managed to put off during the time of his courtship now, after his marriage, all came upon him at once.

To escape from debts was impossible. An outlying part of the estate was sold and the most pressing obligations met, but others remained, and he had no money. The estate yielded a good revenue, but he had had to send payments to his brother and to spend on his own marriage, so that there was no ready money and the factory could not carry on and would have to be closed down. The only way of escape was to use his wife's money; and Liza, having realized her husband's position, insisted on this herself. Eugène agreed, but only on condition that he should give her a mortgage on half his estate, which he did. Of course this was done not for his wife's sake, who felt offended at it, but to appease his mother-in-law.

These affairs with various fluctuations of success and failure helped to poison Eugène's life that first year. Another thing was his wife's ill-health. That same first year, seven months after their marriage, a misfortune befell Liza. She was driving out to meet her husband on his return from town, and the quiet horse became rather playful and she was frightened and jumped out. Her jump was comparatively fortunate—she might have been caught by the wheel—but she was pregnant, and that same night the pains began and she had a miscarriage from which she was long in recovering. The loss of the expected child and his wife's illness, together with the disorder in his affairs, and above all the presence of his mother-in-law, who arrived as soon as Liza fell ill—all this together made the year still harder for Eugène.

But notwithstanding these difficult circumstances, towards the end of the first year Eugène felt very well. First of all his cherished hope of restoring his fallen fortune and renewing his grandfather's way of life in a new form, was approaching accomplishment, though slowly and with difficulty. There was no longer any question of having to sell the whole estate to meet the debts. The chief estate, thoughh transferred to his wife's name, was saved, and if only the beet crop succeeded and the price kept up, by next year his position of want and stress might be replaced by one of complete prosperity. That was one thing.

Another was that however much he had expected from his wife, he

had never expected to find in her what he actually found. He found not what he had expected, but something much better. Raptures of love—though he tried to produce them—did not take place or were very slight, but he discovered something quite different, namely that he was not merely more cheerful and happier but that it had become easier to live. He did not know why this should be so, but it was.

And it was so because immediately after marriage his wife decided that Eugène Irténev was superior to anyone else in the world: wiser, purer, and nobler than they, and that therefore it was right for everyone to serve him and please him; but that as it was impossible to make everyone do this, she must do it herself to the limit of her strength. And she did; directing all her strength of mind towards learning and guessing what he liked, and then doing just that thing, whatever it was and however difficult it might be.

She had the gift which furnishes the chief delight of intercourse with a loving woman: thanks to her love of her husband she penetrated into his soul. She knew his every state and his every shade of feeling—better it seemed to him than he himself—and she behaved correspondingly and therefore never hurt his feelings, but always lessened his distresses and strengthened his joys. And she understood not only his feelings but also his joys. Things quite foreign to her—concerning the farming, the factory, or the appraisement of others—she immediately understood so that she could not merely converse with him, but could often, as he himself said, be a useful and irreplaceable counselor. She regarded affairs and people and everything in the world only though his eyes. She loved her mother, but having seen that Eugène disliked his mother-in-law's interference in their life she immediately took her husband's side, and did so with such decision that he had to restrain her.

Besides all this she had very good taste, much tact, and above all she had repose. All that she did, she did unnoticed; only the results of what she did were observable, namely, that always and in everything there was cleanliness, order, and elegance. Liza had at once understood in what her husband's ideal of life consisted, and she tried to attain, and in the arrangement and order of the house did attain, what he wanted. Children it is true were lacking, but there was hope of that also. In winter she went to Petersburg to see a specialist and he assured them that she was quite well and could have children.

And this desire was accomplished. By the end of the year she was again pregnant.

The one thing that threatened, not to say poisoned, their happiness was her jealousy—a jealousy she restrained and did not exhibit, but

from which she often suffered. Not only might Eugène not love any other woman—because there was not a woman on earth worthy of him (as to whether she herself was worthy or not she never asked herself)—but not a single woman might therefore dare to love him.

XIII

This was how they lived: he rose early, as he always had done, and went to see to the farm or the factory where work was going on, or sometimes to the fields. Towards ten o'clock he would come back for his coffee, which they had on the veranda: Mary Pávlovna, an uncle who lived with them, and Liza. After a conversation which was often very animated while they drank their coffee, they dispersed till dinnertime. At two o'clock they dined and then went for a walk or a drive. In the evening when he returned from the office they drank their evening tea and sometimes he read aloud while she worked, or when there were guests they had music or conversation. When he went away on business he wrote to his wife and received letters from her every day. Sometimes she accompanied him, and then they were particularly merry. On his name-day and on hers guests assembled, and it pleased him to see how well she managed to arrange things so that everybody enjoyed coming. He saw and heard that they all admired her—the young, agreeable hostess—and he loved her still more for this.

All went excellently. She bore her pregnancy easily and, though they were afraid, they both began making plans as to how they would bring the child up. The system of education and the arrangements were all decided by Eugène, and her only wish was to carry out his desires obediently. Eugène on his part read up medical works and intended to bring the child up according to all the precepts of science. She of course agreed to everything and made preparations, making warm and also cool "envelopes,"[23] and preparing a cradle. Thus the second year of their marriage arrived and the second spring.

[23] An "envelope" was a small mattress with a coverlet attached, on which babies were carried about. —*A. M.*

IX

It was just before Trinity Sunday. Liza was in her fifth month, and though careful she was still brisk and active. Both his mother and hers were living in the house, but under the pretext of watching and safeguarding her only upset her by their tiffs. Eugène was specially engrossed with a new experiment for the cultivation of sugar-beet on a large scale.

Just before Trinity Liza decided it was necessary to have a thorough housecleaning as it had not been done since Easter, and she hired two women by the day to help the servants wash the floors and windows, beat the furniture and the carpets, and put covers on them. These women came early in the morning, heated the coppers, and set to work. One of the two was Stepanída, who had just weaned her baby boy and had begged for the job of washing the floors through the office-clerk—whom she now carried on with. She wanted to have a good look at the new mistress. Stepanída was living by herself as formerly, her husband being away, and she was up to tricks as she had formerly been first with old Daniel (who had once caught her taking some logs of firewood), afterwards with the master, and now with the young clerk. She was not concerning herself any longer about her master. "He has a wife now," she thought. But it would be good to have a look at the lady and at her establishment: folk said it was well arranged.

Eugène had not seen her since he had met her with the child. Having a baby to attend to she had not been going out to work, and he seldom walked through the village. That morning, on the eve of Trinity Sunday, he got up at five o'clock and rode to the fallow land which was to be sprinkled with phosphates, and had left the house before the women were about, and while they were still engaged lighting the copper fires.

He returned to breakfast merry, contented, and hungry; dismounting from his mare at the gate and handing her over to the gardener. Flicking the high grass with his whip and repeating a phrase he had just uttered, as one often does, he walked towards the house. The phrase was: "phosphates justify"—what or to whom, he neither knew nor reflected.

They were beating a carpet on the grass. The furniture had been brought out.

"There now! What a housecleaning Liza has undertaken! … Phosphates justify. … What a manageress she is! Yes, a manageress," said he to himself, vividly imagining her in her white wrapper and with her

smiling joyful face, as it nearly always was when he looked at her. "Yes, I must change my boots, or else 'phosphates justify,' that is, smell of manure, and the manageress in such a condition. Why 'in such a condition'? Because a new little Irténev is growing there inside her," he thought. "Yes, phosphates justify," and smiling at his thoughts he put his hand to the door of his room.

But he had not time to push the door before it opened of itself and he came face to face with a woman coming towards him carrying a pail, barefoot and with sleeves turned up high. He stepped aside to let her pass and she too stepped aside, adjusting her kerchief with a wet hand.

"Go on, go on, I won't go in, if you …" began Eugène and suddenly stopped, recognizing her.

She glanced merrily at him with smiling eyes, and pulling down her skirt went out at the door.

"What nonsense! … It is impossible," said Eugène to himself, frowning and waving his hand as though to get rid of a fly, displeased at having noticed her. He was vexed that he had noticed her and yet he could not take his eyes from her strong body, swayed by her agile strides, from her bare feet, or from her arms and shoulders, and the pleasing folds of her shirt and the handsome skirt tucked up high above her white calves.

"But why am I looking?" said he to himself, lowering his eyes so as not to see her. "And anyhow I must go in to get some other boots." And he turned back to go into his own room, but had not gone five steps before he again glanced round to have another look at her without knowing why or wherefore. She was just going round the corner and also glanced at him.

"Ah, what am I doing!" said he to himself. "She may think … It is even certain that she already does think …"

He entered his damp room. Another woman, an old and skinny one, was there, and was still washing it. Eugène passed on tiptoe across the floor, wet with dirty water, to the wall where his boots stood, and he was about to leave the room when the woman herself went out.

"This one has gone and the other, Stepanída, will come here alone," someone within him began to reflect.

"My God, what am I thinking of and what am I doing!" He seized his boots and ran out with them into the hall, put them on there, brushed himself, and went out onto the veranda where both the mammas were already drinking coffee. Liza had evidently been expecting him and came onto the veranda through another door at the same

time.

"My God! If she, who considers me so honourable, pure, and innocent—if she only knew!"—thought he.

Liza as usual met him with shining face. But today somehow she seemed to him particularly pale, yellow, long, and weak.

X

During coffee, as often happened, a peculiarly feminine kind of conversation went on which had no logical sequence but which evidently was connected in some way for it went on uninterruptedly.

The two old ladies were pinpricking one another, and Liza was skillfully manoeuvring between them.

"I am so vexed that we had not finished washing your room before you got back," she said to her husband. "But I do so want to get everything arranged."

"Well, did you sleep well after I got up?"

"Yes, I slept well and I fell well."

"How can a woman be well in her condition during this intolerable heat, when her windows face the sun," said Varvára Alexéevna, her mother. "And they have no venetian-blinds or awnings. I always had awnings."

"But you know we are in the shade after ten o'clock," said Mary Pávlovna.

"That's what causes fever; it comes of dampness," said Varvára Alexéevna, not noticing that what she was saying did not agree with what she had just said. "My doctor always says that it is impossible to diagnose an illness unless one knows the patient. And he certainly knows, for he is the leading physician and we pay him a hundred rubles a visit. My late husband did not believe in doctors, but he did not grudge me anything."

"How can a man grudge anything to a woman when perhaps her life and the child's depend …"

"Yes, when she has means a wife need not depend on her husband. A good wife submits to her husband," said Varvára Alexéevna—"only Liza is too weak after her illness."

"Oh no, mamma, I feel quite well. But why have they not brought you any boiled cream?"

"I don't want any. I can do with raw cream."

"I offered some to Varvára Alexéevna, but she declined," said Mary

Pávlovna, as if justifying herself.

"No, I don't want any today." And as if to terminate an unpleasant conversation and yield magnanimously, Varvára Alexéevna turned to Eugène and said: "Well, and have you sprinkled the phosphates?"

Liza ran to fetch the cream.

"But I don't want it. I don't want it."

"Liza, Liza, go gently," said Mary Pávlovna. "Such rapid movements do her harm."

"Nothing does harm if one's mind is at peace," said Varvára Alexéevna as if referring to something, though she knew that there was nothing her words could refer to.

Liza returned with the cream and Eugène drank his coffee and listened morosely. He was accustomed to these conversations, but today he was particularly annoyed by its lack of sense. He wanted to think over what had happened to him but this chatter disturbed him. Having finished her coffee Varvára Alexéevna went away in a bad humour. Liza, Eugène, and Mary Pávlovna stayed behind, and their conversation was simple and pleasant. But Liza, being sensitive, at once noticed that something was tormenting Eugène, and she asked him whether anything unpleasant had happened. He was not prepared for this question and hesitated a little before replying that there had been nothing. This reply made Liza think all the more. That something was tormenting him, and greatly tormenting, was as evident to her as that a fly had fallen into the milk, yet he would not speak of it. What could it be?

XI

After breakfast they all dispersed. Eugène as usual went to his study, but instead of beginning to read or write his letters, he sat smoking one cigarette after another and thinking. He was terribly surprised and disturbed by the unexpected recrudescence within him of the bad feeling from which he had thought himself free since his marriage. Since then he had not once experienced that feeling, either for her—the woman he had known—or for any other woman except his wife. He had often felt glad of this emancipation, and now suddenly a chance meeting, seemingly so unimportant, revealed to him the fact that he was not free. What now tormented him was not that he was yielding to that feeling and desired her—he did not dream of so doing—but that the feeling was awake within him and he had to be on his guard

against it. He had not doubt but that he would suppress it.

He had a letter to answer and a paper to write, and sat down at his writing table and began to work. Having finished it and quite forgotten what had disturbed him, he went out to go to the stables. And again as ill-luck would have it, either by unfortunate chance or intentionally, as soon as he stepped from the porch a red skirt and a red kerchief appeared from round the corner, and she went past him swinging her arms and swaying her body. She not only went past him, but on passing him ran, as if playfully, to overtake her fellow-servant.

Again the bright midday, the nettles, the back of Daniel's hut, and in the shade of the plane-trees her smiling face biting some leaves, rose in his imagination.

"No, it is impossible to let matters continue so," he said to himself, and waiting till the women had passed out of sight he went to the office.

It was just the dinner-hour and he hoped to find the steward still there, and so it happened. The steward was just waking up from his after-dinner nap, and stretching himself and yawning was standing in the office, looking at the herdsman who was telling him something.

"Vasíli Nikoláich!" said Eugène to the steward.

"What is your pleasure?"

"I want to speak to you."

"What is your pleasure?"

"Just finish what you are saying."

"Aren't you going to bring it in?" said Vasíli Nikoláich to the herdsman.

"It's heavy, Vasíli Nikoláich."

"What is it?" asked Eugène.

"Why, a cow has calved in the meadow. Well, all right, I'll order them to harness a horse at once. Tell Nicholas Lysúkh to get out the dray cart."

The herdsman went out.

"Do you know," began Eugène, flushing and conscious that he was doing so, "do you know, Vasíli Nikoláich, while I was a bachelor I went off the track a bit. … You may have heard …"

Vasíli Nikoláich, evidently sorry for his master, said with smiling eyes: "Is it about Stepanída?"

"Why, yes. Look here. Please, please do not engage her to help in the house. You understand, it is very awkward for me …"

"Yes, it must have been Ványa the clerk who arranged it."

"Yes, please … and hadn't the rest of the phosphate better be

strewn?" said Eugène, to hide his confusion.

"Yes, I am just going to see to it."

So the matter ended, and Eugène calmed down, hoping that as he had lived for a year without seeing her, so things would go on now. "Besides, Vasíli Nikoláich will speak to Iván the clerk; Iván will speak to her, and she will understand that I don't want it," said Eugène to himself, and he was glad he had forced himself to speak to Vasíli Nikoláich, hard as it had been to do so.

"Yes, it is better, much better, than that feeling of doubt, that feeling of shame." He shuddered at the mere remembrance of his sin in thought.

XII

The moral effort he had made to overcome his shame and speak to Vasíli Nikoláich tranquillized Eugène. It seemed to him that the matter was all over now. Liza at once noticed that he was quite calm, and even happier than usual. "No doubt he was upset by our mothers pinpricking one another. It really is disagreeable, especially for him who is so sensitive and noble, always to hear such unfriendly and ill-mannered insinuations," thought she.

The next day was Trinity Sunday. It was a beautiful day, and the peasant-women, on their way into the woods to plait wreaths, came, according to custom, to the landowner's home and began to sing and dance. Mary Pávlovna and Varvára Alexéevna came out onto the porch in smart clothes, carrying sunshades, and went up to the ring of singers. With them, in a jacket of Chinese silk, came out the uncle, a flabby libertine and drunkard, who was living that summer with Eugène.

As usual there was a bright, many-coloured ring of young women and girls, the centre of everything, and around these from different sides like attendant planets that had detached themselves and were circling round, went girls hand in hand, rustling in their new print gowns; young lads giggling and running backwards and forwards after one another; full-grown lads in dark blue or black coats and caps and with red shirts, who unceasingly spat out sunflower-seed shells; and the domestic servants or other outsiders watching the dance-circle from aside. Both the old ladies went close up to the ring, and Liza accompanied them in a light blue dress, with light blue ribbons on her head, and with wide sleeves under which her long white arms and angular elbows were visible.

Eugène did not wish to come out, but it was ridiculous to hide, and he too came out onto the porch smoking a cigarette, bowed to the men and lads, and talked with one of them. The women meanwhile shouted a dance-song with all their might, snapping their fingers, clapping their hands, and dancing.

"They are calling for the master," said a youngster coming up to Eugène's wife, who had not noticed the call. Liza called Eugène to look at the dance and at one of the women dancers who particularly pleased her. This was Stepanída. She wore a yellow skirt, a velveteen sleeveless jacket and a silk kerchief, and was broad, energetic, ruddy, and merry. No doubt she danced well. He saw nothing.

"Yes, yes," he said, removing and replacing his pince-nez. "Yes, yes," he repeated. "So it seems I cannot be rid of her," he thought.

He did not look at her, fearing her attraction, and just on that account what his passing glance caught of her seemed to him especially attractive. Besides this he saw by her sparkling look that she saw him and saw that he admired her. He stood there as long as propriety demanded, and seeing that Varvára Alexéevna had called her "my dear" senselessly and insincerely and was talking to her, he turned aside and went away.

He went into the house in order not to see her, but on reaching the upper story he approached the window, without knowing how or why, and as long as the women remained at the porch he stood there and looked and looked at her, feasting his eyes on her.

He ran, while there was no one to see him, and then went with quiet steps onto the veranda and from there, smoking a cigarette, he passed through the garden as if going for a stroll, and followed the direction she had taken. He had not gone two steps along the alley before he noticed behind the trees a velveteen sleeveless jacket, with a pink and yellow skirt and a red kerchief. She was going somewhere with another woman. "Where are they going?"

And suddenly a terrible desire scorched him as though a hand were seizing his heart. As if by someone else's wish he looked round and went towards her.

"Eugène Iványich, Eugène Iványich! I have come to see your honour," said a voice behind him, and Eugène, seeing old Samókhin who was digging a well for him, roused himself and turning quickly round went to meet Samókhin. While speaking with him he turned sideways and saw that she and the woman who was with her went down the slope, evidently to the well or making an excuse of the well, and having stopped there a little while ran back to the dance-circle.

XIII

After talking to Samókhin, Eugène returned to the house as depressed as if he had committed a crime. In the first place she had understood him, believed that he wanted to see her, and desired it herself. Secondly that other woman, Anna Prókhorova, evidently knew of it.

Above all he felt that he was conquered, that he was not master of his own will but that there was another power moving him, that he had been saved only by good fortune, and that if not today then tomorrow or a day later, he would perish all the same.

"Yes, perish," he did not understand it otherwise: to be unfaithful to his young and loving wife with a peasant-woman in the village, in the sight of everyone—what was it but to perish, perish utterly, so that it would be impossible to live? No, something must be done.

"My God, my God! What am I to do? Can it be that I shall perish like this?" said he to himself. "Is it not possible to do anything? Yet something must be done. Do not think about her"—he ordered himself. "Do not think!" and immediately he began thinking and seeing her before him, and seeing also the shade of the plane-tree.

He remembered having read of a hermit who, to avoid the temptation he felt for a woman on whom he had to lay his hand to heal her, thrust his other hand into a brazier and burnt his fingers. He called that to mind. "Yes, I am ready to burn my fingers rather than to perish." He looked round to make sure that there was no one in the room, lit a candle, and put a finger into the flame. "There, now think about her," he said to himself ironically. It hurt him and he withdrew his smoke-stained finger, threw away the match, and laughed at himself. What nonsense! That was not what had to be done. But it was necessary to do something, to avoid seeing her—either to go away himself or to send her away. Yes—send her away. Offer her husband money to remove to town or to another village. People would hear of it and would talk about it. Well, what of that? At any rate it was better than this danger. "Yes, that must be done," he said to himself, and at that very moment he was looking at her without moving his eyes. "Where is she going?" he suddenly asked himself. She, it seemed to him, had seen him at the window and now, having glanced at him and taken another woman by the hand, was going towards the garden swinging her arm briskly. Without knowing why or wherefore, merely in accord with what he had been thinking, he went to the office.

Vasíli Nikoláich in holiday costume and with oiled hair was sitting at tea with his wife and a guest who was wearing an oriental kerchief.

"I want a word with you, Vasíli Nikoláich!"

"Please say what you want to. We have finished tea."

"No. I'd rather you came out with me."

"Directly; only let me get my cap. Tánya, put out the samovar," said Vasíli Nikoláich, stepping outside cheerfully.

It seemed to Eugène that Vasíli had been drinking, but what was to be done? It might be all the better—he would sympathize with him in his difficulties the more readily.

"I have come again to speak about that same matter, Vasíli Nikoláich," said Eugène—"about that woman."

"Well, what of her? I told them not to take her again on any account."

"No, I have been thinking in general, and this is what I wanted to take your advice about. Isn't it possible to get them away, to send the whole family away?"

"Where can they be sent?" said Vasíli, disapprovingly and ironically as it seemed to Eugène.

"Well, I thought of giving them money, or even some land in Koltóvski—so that she should not be here."

"But how can they be sent away? Where is he to go—torn up from his roots? And why should you do it? What harm can she do you?"

"Ah, Vasíli Nikoláich, you must understand that it would be dreadful for my wife to hear of it."

"But who will tell her?"

"How can I live with this dread? The whole thing is vary painful for me."

"But really, why should you distress yourself? Whoever stirs up the past—out with his eye! Who is not a sinner before God and to blame before the Tsar, as the saying is?"

"All the same it would be better to get rid of them. Can't you speak to the husband?"

"But it is no use speaking! Eh, Eugène Iványich, what is the matter with you? It is all past and forgotten. All sorts of things happen. Who is there that would now say anything bad of you? Everybody sees you."

"But all the same go and have a talk with him."

"All right, I will speak to him."

Though he knew that nothing would come of it, this talk somewhat calmed Eugène. Above all, it made him feel that through excitement he had been exaggerating the danger.

Had he gone to meet her by appointment? It was impossible. He had simply gone to stroll in the garden and she had happened to run

out at the same time.

XIV

After dinner that very Trinity Sunday Liza while walking from the garden to the meadow, where her husband wanted to show her the clover, took a false step and fell when crossing a little ditch. She fell gently, on her side; but she gave an exclamation, and her husband saw an expression in her face not only of fear but of pain. He was about to help her up, but she motioned him away with her hand.

"No, wait a bit, Eugène," she said, with a weak smile, and looked up guiltily as it seemed to him. "My foot only gave way under me."

"There, I always say," remarked Varvára Alexéevna, "can anyone in her condition possibly jump over ditches?"

"But it is all right, mamma. I shall get up directly." With her husband's help she did get up, but she immediately turned pale, and looked frightened.

"Yes, I am not well!" and she whispered something to her mother.

"Oh, my God, what have you done! I said you ought not to go there," cried Varvára Alexéevna. "Wait—I will call the servants. She must not walk. She must be carried!"

"Don't be afraid, Liza, I will carry you," said Eugène, putting his left arm round her. "Hold me by the neck. Like that." And stopping down he put his right arm under her knees and lifted her. He could never afterwards forget the suffering and yet beatific expression of her face.

"I am too heavy for you, dear," she said with a smile. "Mamma is running, tell her!" And she bent towards him and kissed him. She evidently wanted her mother to see how he was carrying her.

Eugène shouted to Varvára Alexéevna not to hurry, and that he would carry Liza home. Varvára Alexéevna stopped and began to shout still louder.

"You will drop her, you'll be sure to drop her. You want to destroy her. You have no conscience!"

"But I am carrying her excellently."

"I do not want to watch you killing my daughter, and I can't." And she ran round the bend in the alley.

"Never mind, it will pass," said Liza, smiling.

"Yes, if only it does not have consequences like last time."

"No. I am not speaking of that. That is all right. I mean mamma.

You are tired. Rest a bit."

But though he found it heavy, Eugène carried his burden proudly and gladly to the house and did not hand her over to the housemaid and the man-cook whom Varvára Alexéevna had found and sent to meet them. He carried her to the bedroom and put her on the bed.

"Now go away," she said, and drawing his hand to her she kissed it. "Ánnushka and I will manage all right."

Mary Pávlovna also ran in from her rooms in the wing. They undressed Liza and laid her on the bed. Eugène sat in the drawing room with a book in his hand, waiting. Varvára Alexéevna went past him with such a reproachfully gloomy air that he felt alarmed.

"Well, how is it?" he asked.

"How is it? What's the good of asking? It is probably what you wanted when you made your wife jump over the ditch."

"Varvára Alexéevna!" he cried. "This is impossible. If you want to torment people and to poison their life" (he wanted to say, "then go elsewhere to do it," but restrained himself). "How is it that it does not hurt you?"

"It is too late now." And shaking her cap in a triumphant manner she passed out by the door.

The fall had really been a bad one; Liza's foot had twisted awkwardly and there was danger of her having another miscarriage. Everyone knew that there was nothing to be done but that she must just lie quietly, yet all the same they decided to send for a doctor.

"Dear Nikoláy Semënich," wrote Eugène to the doctor, "you have always been so kind to us that I hope you will not refuse to come to my wife's assistance. She …" and so on. Having written the letter he went to the stables to arrange about the horses and the carriage. Horses had to be got ready to bring the doctor and others to take him back. When an estate is not run on a large scale, such things cannot be quickly decided but have to be considered. Having arranged it all and dispatched the coachman, it was past nine before he got back to the house. His wife was lying down, and said that she felt perfectly well and had no pain. But Varvára Alexéevna was sitting with a lamp screened from Liza by some sheets of music and knitting a large red coverlet, with a mien that said that after what had happened peace was impossible, but that she at any rate would do her duty no matter what anyone else did.

Eugène noticed this, but, to appear as if he had not done so, tried to assume a cheerful and tranquil air and told how he had chosen the horses and how capitally the mare, Kabúshka, had galloped as left

trace-horse in the troika.

"Yes, of course, it is just the time to exercise the horses when help is needed. Probably the doctor will also be thrown into the ditch," remarked Varvára Alexéevna, examining her knitting from under her pince-nez and moving it close up to the lamp.

"But you know we had to send one way or another, and I made the best arrangement I could."

"Yes, I remember very well how your horses galloped with me under the arch of the gateway." This was a long-standing fancy of hers, and Eugène now was injudicious enough to remark that that was not quite what had happened.

"It is not for nothing that I have always said, and have often remarked to the prince, that it is hardest of all to live with people who are untruthful and insincere. I can endure anything except that."

"Well, if anyone has to suffer more than another, it is certainly I," said Eugène. "But you …"

"Yes, it is evident."

"What?"

"Nothing, I am only counting my stitches."

Eugène was standing at the time by the bed and Liza was looking at him, and one of her moist hands outside the coverlet caught his hand and pressed it. "Bear with her for my sake. You know she cannot prevent our loving one another," was what her look said.

"I won't do so again. It's nothing," he whispered, and he kissed her damp, long hand and then her affectionate eyes, which closed while he kissed them.

"Can it be the same thing over again?" he asked. "How are you feeling?"

"I am afraid to say for fear of being mistaken, but I feel that he is alive and will live," said she, glancing at her stomach.

"Ah, it is dreadful, dreadful to think of."

Notwithstanding Liza's insistence that he should go away, Eugène spent the night with her, hardly closing an eye and ready to attend on her.

But she passed the night well, and had they not sent for the doctor she would perhaps have got up.

By dinnertime the doctor arrived and of course said that though if the symptoms recurred there might be cause for apprehension, yet actually there were no positive symptoms, but as there were also no contrary indications one might suppose on the one hand that—and on the other hand that … And therefore she must lie still, and that "though

I do not like prescribing, yet all the same she should take this mixture and should lie quiet." Besides this, the doctor gave Varvára Alexéevna a lecture on woman's anatomy, during which Varvára Alexéevna nodded her head significantly. Having received his fee, as usual into the backmost part of his palm, the doctor drove away and the patient was left to lie in bed for a week.

XV

Eugène spent most of his time by his wife's bedside, talking to her, reading to her, and what was hardest of all, enduring without murmur Varvára Alexéevna's attacks, and even contriving to turn these into jokes.

But he could not stay at home all the time. In the first place his wife sent him away, saying that he would fall ill if he always remained with her; and secondly the farming was progressing in a way that demanded his presence at every step. He could not stay at home, but had to be in the fields, in the wood, in the garden, at the thrashing-floor; and everywhere he was pursued not merely by the thought but by the vivid image of Stepanída, and he only occasionally forgot her. But that would not have mattered, he could perhaps have mastered his feeling; what was worst of all was that, whereas he had previously lived for months without seeing her, he now continually came across her. She evidently understood that he wished to renew relations with her and tried to come in his way. Nothing was said either by him or by her, and therefore neither he nor she went directly to a rendezvous, but only sought opportunities of meeting.

The most possible place for them to meet was in the forest, where peasant-women went with sacks to collect grass for their cows. Eugène knew this and therefore went there every day. Every day he told himself that he would not go, and every day it ended by his making his way to the forest and, on hearing the sound of voices, standing behind the bushes with sinking heart looking to see if she was there.

Why he wanted to know whether it was she who was there, he did not know. If it had been she and she had been alone, he would not have gone to her—so he believed—he would have run away; but he wanted to see her.

Once he met her. As he was entering the forest she came out of it with two other women, carrying a heavy sack full of grass on her back. A little earlier he would perhaps have met her in the forest. Now, with

the other women there, she could not go back to him. But though he realized this impossibility, he stood for a long time behind a hazel bush, at the risk of attracting the other women's attention. Of course she did not return, but he stayed there a long time. And, great heavens, how delightful his imagination made her appear to him! And this not only once, but five or six times, and each time more intensely. Never had she seemed so attractive, and never had he been so completely in her power.

He felt that he had lost control of himself and had become almost insane. His strictness with himself had not weakened a jog; on the contrary he saw all the abomination of his desire and even of his action, for his going to the wood was an action. He knew that he only need come near her anywhere in the dark, and if possible touch her, and he would yield to his feelings. He knew that it was only shame before people, before her, and no doubt before himself that restrained him. And he knew too that he had sought conditions in which that shame would not be apparent—darkness or proximity—in which it would be stifled by animal passion. And therefore he knew that he was a wretched criminal, and despised and hated himself with all his soul. He hated himself because he still had not surrendered: every day he prayed God to strengthen him, to save him from perishing; every day he determined that from today onward he would not take a step to see her, and would forget her. Every day he devised means of delivering himself from this enticement, and he made use of those means.

But it was all in vain.

One of the means was continual occupation; another was intense physical work and fasting; a third was imagining to himself the shame that would fall upon him when everybody knew of it—his wife, his mother-in-law, and the folk around. He did all this and it seemed to him that he was conquering, but midday came—the hour of their former meetings and the hour when he had met her carrying the grass—and he went to the forest. Thus five days of torment passed. He only saw her from a distance, and did not once encounter her.

XVI

Liza was gradually recovering, she could move about and was only uneasy at the change that had taken place in her husband, which she did not understand.

Varvára Alexéevna had gone away for a while, and the only visitor

was Eugène's uncle. Mary Pávlovna was as usual at home.

Eugène was in his semi-insane condition when there came two days of pouring rain, as often happens after thunder in June. The rain stopped all work. They even ceased carting manure on account of the dampness and dirt. The peasants remained at home. The herdsmen wore themselves out with the cattle, and eventually drove them home. The cows and sheep wandered about in the pastureland and ran loose in the grounds. The peasant-women, barefoot and wrapped in shawls, splashing through the mud, rushed about to seek the runaway cows. Streams flowed everywhere along the paths, all the leaves and all the grass were saturated with water, and streams flowed unceasingly from the spouts into the bubbling puddles. Eugène sat at home with his wife, who was particularly wearisome that day. She questioned Eugène several times as to the cause of his discontent, and he replied with vexation that nothing was the matter. She ceased questioning him but was still distressed.

They were sitting after breakfast in the drawing room. His uncle for the hundredth time was recounting fabrications about his society acquaintances. Liza was knitting a jacket and sighed, complaining of the weather and of a pain in the small of her back. The uncle advised her to lie down, and asked for vodka for himself. It was terribly dull for Eugène in the house. Everything was weak and dull. He read a book and a magazine, but understood nothing of them.

"I must go out and look at the rasping-machine they brought yesterday," said he, and got up and went out.

"Take an umbrella with you."

"Oh, no, I have a leather coat. And I am only going as far as the boiling-room."

He put on his boots and his leather coat and went to the factory; and he had not gone twenty steps before he met her coming towards him, with her skirts tucked up high above her white calves. She was walking, holding down the shawl in which her head and shoulders were wrapped.

"Where are you going?" said he, not recognizing her the first instant. When he recognized her it was already too late. She stopped, smiling, and looked long at him.

"I am looking for a calf. Where are you off to in such weather?" said she, as if she were seeing him every day.

"Come to the shed," said he suddenly, without knowing how he said it. It was as if someone else had uttered the words.

She bit her shawl, winked, and ran in the direction which led from

the garden to the shed, and he continued his path, intending to turn off beyond the lilac-bush and go there too.

"Master," he heard a voice behind him. "The mistress is calling you, and wants you to come back for a minute."

This was Mísha, his manservant.

"My God! This is the second time you have saved me," thought Eugène, and immediately turned back. His wife reminded him that he had promised to take some medicine at the dinner-hour to a sick woman, and he had better take it with him.

While they were getting the medicine some five minutes elapsed, and then, going away with the medicine, he hesitated to go direct to the shed lest he should be seen from the house, but as soon as he was out of sight he promptly turned and made his way to it. He already saw her in imagination inside the shed smiling gaily. But she was not there, and there was nothing in the shed to show that she had been there.

He was already thinking that she had not come, had not heard or understood his words—he had muttered them through his nose as if afraid of her hearing them—or perhaps she had not wanted to come. "And why did I imagine that she would rush to me? She has her own husband; it is only I who am such a wretch as to have a wife, and a good one, and to run after another." Thus he thought sitting in the shed, the thatch of which had a leak and dripped from its straw. "But how delightful it would be if she did come—alone here in this rain. If only I could embrace her once again, then let happen what may. But I could tell if she has been here by her footprints," he reflected. He looked at the trodden ground near the shed and at the path overgrown by grass, and the fresh print of bare feet, and even of one that had slipped, was visible. "Yes, she has been here. Well, now it is settled. Wherever I may see her I shall go straight to her. I will go to her at night." He sat for a long time in the shed and left it exhausted and crushed. He delivered the medicine, returned home, and lay down in his room to wait for dinner.

XVII

Before dinner Liza came to him and, still wondering what could be the cause of his discontent, began to say that she was afraid he did not like the idea of her going to Moscow for her confinement, and that she had decided that she would remain at home and on no account

go to Moscow. He knew how she feared both her confinement itself and the risk of not having a healthy child, and therefore he could not help being touched at seeing how ready she was to sacrifice everything for his sake. All was so nice, so pleasant, so clean, in the house; and in his soul it was so dirty, despicable, and foul. The whole evening Eugène was tormented by knowing that notwithstanding his sincere repulsion at his own weakness, notwithstanding his firm intention to break off—the same thing would happen again tomorrow.

"No, this is impossible," he said to himself, walking up and down in his room. "There must be some remedy for it. My God! What am I to do?"

Someone knocked at the door as foreigners do. He knew this must be his uncle. "Come in," he said.

The uncle had come as a self-appointed ambassador from Liza.

"Do you know, I really do notice that there is a change in you," he said—"and Liza—I understand how it troubles her. I understand that it must be hard for you to leave all the business you have so excellently started, but *que veux-tu*?[24] I should advise you to go away. It will be more satisfactory both for you and for her. And do you know, I should advise you to go to the Crimea. The climate is beautiful and there is an excellent accoucheur there, and you would be just in time for the best of the grape season."

"Uncle," Eugène suddenly exclaimed. "Can you keep a secret? A secret that is terrible to me, a shameful secret."

"Oh, come—do you really feel any doubt of me?"

"Uncle, you can help me. Not only help, but save me!" said Eugène. And the thought of disclosing his secret to his uncle whom he did not respect, the thought that he should show himself in the worst light and humiliate himself before him, was pleasant. He felt himself to be despicable and guilty, and wished to punish himself.

"Speak, my dear fellow, you know how fond I am of you," said the uncle, evidently well content that there was a secret and that it was a shameful one, and that it would be communicated to him, and that he could be of use.

"First of all I must tell you that I am a wretch, a good-for-nothing, a scoundrel—a real scoundrel."

"Now what are you saying …" began his uncle, as if he were offended.

"What! Not a wretch when I—Liza's husband, Liza's! One has only to know her purity, her love—and that I, her husband, want to

[24] What would you have?

be untrue to her with a peasant-woman!"

"What is this? Why do you want to—you have not been unfaithful to her?"

"Yes, at least just the same as being untrue, for it did not depend on me. I was ready to do so. I was hindered, or else I should … now. I do not know what I should have done …"

"But please, explain to me …"

"Well, it is like this. When I was a bachelor I was stupid enough to have relations with a woman here in our village. That is to say, I used to have meetings with her in the forest, in the field …"

"Was she pretty?" asked his uncle.

Eugène frowned at this question, but he was in such need of external help that he made as if he did not hear it, and continued:

"Well, I thought this was just casual and that I should break it off and have done with it. And I did break it off before my marriage. For nearly a year I did not see her or think about her." It seemed strange to Eugène himself to hear the description of his own condition. "Then suddenly, I don't myself know why—really one sometimes believes in witchcraft—I saw her, and a worm crept into my heart; and it gnaws. I reproach myself, I understand the full horror of my action, that is to say, of the act I may commit any moment, and yet I myself turn to it, and if I have not committed it, it is only because God preserved me. Yesterday I was on my way to see her when Liza sent for me."

"What, in the rain?"

"Yes. I am worn out, Uncle, and have decided to confess to you and to ask your help."

"Yes, of course, it's a bad thing on your own estate. People will get to know. I understand that Liza is weak and that it is necessary to spare her, but why on your own estate?"

Again Eugène tried not to hear what his uncle was saying, and hurried on to the core of the matter.

"Yes, save me from myself. That is what I ask of you. Today I was hindered by chance. But tomorrow or next time no one will hinder me. And she knows now. Don't leave me alone."

"Yes, all right," said his uncle—"but are you really so much in love?"

"Oh, it is not that at all. It is not that, it is some kind of power that has seized me and holds me. I do not know what to do. Perhaps I shall gain strength, and then …"

"Well, it turns out as I suggested," said his uncle. "Let us be off to the Crimea."

"Yes, yes, let us go, and meanwhile you will be with me and will talk to me."

XVIII

The fact that Eugène had confided his secret to his uncle, and still more the sufferings of his conscience and the feeling of shame he experienced after that rainy day, sobered him. It was settled that they would start for Yálta in a week's time. During that week Eugène drove to town to get money for the journey, gave instructions from the house and from the office concerning the management of the estate, again became gay and friendly with his wife, and began to awaken morally.

So without having once seen Stepanída after that rainy day he left with his wife for the Crimea. There he spent an excellent two months. He received so many new impressions that it seemed to him that the past was obliterated from his memory. In the Crimea they met former acquaintances and became particularly friendly with them, and they also made new acquaintances. Life in the Crimea was a continual holiday for Eugène, besides being instructive and beneficial. They became friendly there with the former Marshal of the Nobility of their province, a clever and liberal-minded man who became fond of Eugène and coached him, and attracted him to his Party.

At the end of August Liza gave birth to a beautiful, healthy daughter, and her confinement was unexpectedly easy.

In September they returned home, the four of them, including the baby and its wet-nurse, as Liza was unable to nurse it herself. Eugène returned home entirely free from the former horrors and quite a new and happy man. Having gone through all that a husband goes through when his wife bears a child, he loved her more than ever. His feeling for the child when he took it in his arms was a funny, new, very pleasant and, as it were, a tickling feeling. Another new thing in his life now was that, besides his occupation with the estate, thanks to his acquaintance with Dúmchin (the ex-Marshal) a new interest occupied his mind, that of the Zemstvo—partly an ambitious interest, partly a feeling of duty. In October there was to be a special Assembly, at which he was to be elected. After arriving home he drove once to town and another time to Dúmchin.

Of the torments of his temptation and struggle he had forgotten even to think, and could with difficulty recall them to mind. It seemed to him something like an attack of insanity he had undergone.

To such an extent did he now feel free from it that he was not even afraid to make inquiries on the first occasion when he remained alone with the steward. As he had previously spoken to him about the matter he was not ashamed to ask.

"Well, and is Sídor Péchnikov still away from home?" he inquired.

"Yes, he is still in town."

"And his wife?"

"Oh, she is a worthless woman. She is now carrying on with Zenóvi. She has gone quite on the loose."

"Well, that is all right," thought Eugène. "How wonderfully indifferent to it I am! How I have changed."

XIX

All that Eugène had wished had been realized. He had obtained the property, the factory was working successfully, the beet-crops were excellent, and he expected a large income; his wife had borne a child satisfactorily, his mother-in-law had left, and he had been unanimously elected to the Zemstvo.

He was returning home from town after the election. He had been congratulated and had had to return thanks. He had had dinner and had drunk some five glasses of champagne. Quite new plans of life now presented themselves to him, and he was thinking about these as he drove home. It was the Indian summer: an excellent road and a hot sun. As he approached his home Eugène was thinking of how, as a result of this election, he would occupy among the people the position he had always dreamed of; that is to say, one in which he would be able to serve them not only by production, which gave employment, but also by direct influence. He imagined what his own and the other peasants would think of him in three years' time. "For instance this one," he thought, drifting just then through the village and glancing at a peasant who with a peasant-woman was crossing the street in front of him carrying a full water-tub. They stopped to let his carriage pass. The peasant was old Péchnikov, and the woman was Stepanída. Eugène looked at her, recognized her, and was glad to feel that he remained quite tranquil. She was still as good-looking as ever, but this did not touch him at all. He drove home.

"Well, may we congratulate you?" said his uncle.

"Yes, I was elected."

"Capital! We must drink to it!"

Next day Eugène drove about to see to the farming which he had been neglecting. At the outlying farmstead a new thrashing machine was at work. While watching it Eugène stepped among the women, trying not to take notice of them; but try as he would he once or twice noticed the black eyes and red kerchief of Stepanída, who was carrying away the straw. Once or twice he glanced sideways at her and felt that something was happening, but could not account for it to himself. Only next day, when he again drove to the thrashing-floor and spent two hours there quite unnecessarily, without ceasing to caress with his eyes the familiar, handsome figure of the young woman, did he feel that he was lost, irremediably lost. Again those torments! Again all that horror and fear, and there was no saving himself.

What he expected happened to him. The evening of the next day, without knowing how, he found himself at her backyard, by her hay-shed, where in autumn they had once had a meeting. As though having a stroll, he stopped there lighting a cigarette. A neighbouring peasant-woman saw him, and as he turned back he heard her say to someone: "Go, he is waiting for you—on my dying word he is standing there. Go, you fool!"

He saw how a woman—she—ran to the hay-shed; but as a peasant had met him it was no longer possible for him to turn back, and so he went home.

XX

When he entered the drawing-room everything seemed strange and unnatural to him. He had risen that morning vigorous, determined to fling it all aside, to forget it and not allow himself to think about it. But without noticing how it occurred he had all the morning not merely not interested himself in the work, but tried to avoid it. What had formerly cheered him and been important was now insignificant. Unconsciously he tried to free himself from business. It seemed to him that he had to do so in order to think and to plan. And he freed himself and remained alone. But as soon as he was alone he began to wander about in the garden and the forest. And all those spots were besmirched in his recollection by memories that gripped him. He felt that he was walking in the garden and pretending to himself that he was thinking out something, but that really he was not thinking out anything, but insanely and unreasonably expecting her; expecting that by some miracle she would be aware that he was expecting her, and

would come here at once and go somewhere where no one would see them, or would come at night when there would be no moon, and no one, not even she herself, would see—on such a night she would come and he would touch her body. …

"There now, talking of breaking off when I wish to," he said to himself. "Yes, and that is having a clean healthy woman for one's health sake! No, it seems one can't play with her like that. I thought I had taken her, but it was she who took me; took me and does not let me go. Why, I thought I was free, but I was not free and was deceiving myself when I married. It was all nonsense—fraud. From the time I had her I experienced a new feeling, the real feeling of a husband. Yes, I ought to have lived with her.

"One of two lives is possible for me: that which I began with Liza: service, estate management, the child, and people's respect. If that is life, it is necessary that she, Stepanída, should not be there. She must be sent away, as I said, or destroyed so that she shall not exist. And the other life—is this: For me to take her away from her husband, pay him money, disregard the shame and disgrace, and live with her. But in that case it is necessary that Liza should not exist, nor Mimi (the baby). No, that is not so, the baby does not matter, but it is necessary that there should be no Liza—that she should go away—that she should know, curse me, and go away. That she should know that I have exchanged her for a peasant-woman, that I am a deceiver and a scoundrel!—No, that is too terrible! It is impossible. But it might happen," he went on thinking—"it might happen that Liza might fall ill and die. Die, and then everything would be capital.

"Capital! Oh, scoundrel! No, if someone must die it should be Stepanída. If she were to die, how good it would be.

"Yes, that is how men come to poison or kill their wives or lovers. Take a revolver and go and call her, and instead of embracing her, shoot her in the breast and have done with it.

"Really she is—a devil. Simply a devil. She has possessed herself of me against my own will.

"Kill? Yes. There are only two ways out: to kill my wife or her. For it is impossible to live like this.[25] It is impossible! I must consider the matter and look ahead. If things remain as they are what will happen? I shall again be saying to myself that I do not wish it and that I will throw her off, but it will be merely words; in the evening I shall be at her backyard, and she will know it and will come out. And

[25] At this place the alternative ending, printed at the end of the story, begins.

if people know of it and tell my wife, or if I tell her myself—for I can't lie—I shall not be able to live so. I cannot! People will know. They will all know—Parásha and the blacksmith. Well, is it possible to live so?

"Impossible! There are only two ways out: to kill my wife, or to kill her. Yes, or else … Ah, yes, there is a third way: to kill myself," said he softly, and suddenly a shudder ran over his skin. "Yes, kill myself, then I shall not need to kill them." He became frightened, for he felt that only that way was possible. He had a revolver. "Shall I really kill myself? It is something I never thought of—how strange it will be …"

He returned to his study and at once opened the cupboard where the revolver lay, but before he had taken it out of its case his wife entered the room.

XXI

He threw a newspaper over the revolver.

"Again the same!" said she aghast when she had looked at him.

"What is the same?"

"The same terrible expression that you had before and would not explain to me. Jénya, dear one, tell me about it. I see that you are suffering. Tell me and you will feel easier. Whatever it may be, it will be better than for you to suffer so. Don't I know that it is nothing bad?"

"You know? While …"

"Tell me, tell me, tell me. I won't let you go."

He smiled a piteous smile.

"Shall I?—No, it is impossible. And there is nothing to tell."

Perhaps he might have told her, but at that moment the wet-nurse entered to ask if she should go for a walk. Liza went out to dress the baby.

"Then you will tell me? I will be back directly."

"Yes, perhaps …"

She never could forget the piteous smile with which he said this. She went out.

Hurriedly, stealthily like a robber, he seized the revolver and took it out of its case. It was loaded, yes, but long ago, and one cartridge was missing.

"Well, how will it be?" He put it to his temple and hesitated a little, but as soon as he remembered Stepanída—his decision not to see

her, his struggle, temptation, fall, and renewed struggle—he shuddered with horror. "No, this is better," and he pulled the trigger …

When Liza ran into the room—she had only had time to step down from the balcony—he was lying face downwards on the floor: black, warm blood was gushing from the wound, and his corpse was twitching.

There was an inquest. No one could understand or explain the suicide. It never even entered his uncle's head that its cause could be anything in common with the confession Eugène had made to him two months previously.

Varvára Alexéevna assured them that she had always foreseen it. It had been evident from his way of disputing. Neither Liza nor Mary Pávlovna could at all understand why it had happened, but still they did not believe what the doctors said, namely, that he was mentally deranged—a psychopath. They were quite unable to accept this, for they knew he was saner than hundreds of their acquaintances.

And indeed if Eugène Irténev was mentally deranged everyone is in the same case; the most mentally deranged people are certainly those who see in others indications of insanity they do not notice in themselves.

Variation of the Conclusion of "The Devil"

"To kill, yes. There are only two ways out: to kill my wife, or to kill her. For it is impossible to live like this," said he to himself, and going up to the table he took from it a revolver and, having examined it—one cartridge was wanting—he put it in his trouser pocket.

"My God! What am I doing?" he suddenly exclaimed, and folding his hands he began to pray.

"O God, help me and deliver me! Thou knowest that I do not desire evil, but by myself am powerless. Help me," said he, making the sign of the cross on his breast before the icon.

"Yes, I can control myself. I will go out, walk about and think things over."

He went to the entrance-hall, put on his overcoat and went out onto the porch. Unconsciously his steps took him past the garden along the field path to the outlying farmstead. There the thrashing machine was still droning and the cries of the driver-lads were heard. He entered the barn. She was there. He saw her at once. She was raking up the corn, and on seeing him she ran briskly and merrily about, with laughing eyes, raking up the scattered corn with agility.

Eugène could not help watching her though he did not wish to do so. He only recollected himself when she was no longer in sight. The clerk informed him that they were now finishing thrashing the corn that had been beaten down—that was why it was going slower and the output was less. Eugène went up to the drum, which occasionally gave a knock as sheaves not evenly fed in passed under it, and he asked the clerk if there were many such sheaves of beaten-down corn.

"There will be five cartloads of it."

"Then look here …" began Eugène, but he did not finish the sentence. She had gone close up to the drum and was raking the corn from under it, and she scorched him with her laughing eyes. That look spoke of a merry, careless love between them, of the fact that she knew he wanted her and had come to her shed, and that she as always was ready to live and be merry with him regardless of all conditions or consequences. Eugène felt himself to be in her power but did not wish to yield.

He remembered his prayer and tried to repeat it. He began saying it to himself, but at once felt that it was useless. A single thought now engrossed him entirely: how to arrange a meeting with her so that the others should not notice it.

"If we finish this lot today, are we to start on a fresh stack or leave it till tomorrow?" asked the clerk.

"Yes, yes," replied Eugène, involuntarily following her to the heap to which with the other women she was raking the corn.

"But can I really not master myself?" said he to himself. "Have I really perished? O God! But there is no God. There is only a devil. And it is she. She has possessed me. But I won't, I won't! A devil, yes, a devil."

Again he went up to her, drew the revolver from his pocket and shot her, once, twice, thrice, in the back. She ran a few steps and fell on the heap of corn.

"My God, my God! What is that?" cried the women.

"No, it was not an accident. I killed her on purpose," cried Eugène. "Send for the police-officer."

He went home and went to his study and locked himself in, without speaking to his wife.

"Do not come to me," he cried to her through the door. "You will know all about it."

An hour later he rang, and bade the manservant who answered the bell: "Go and find out whether Stepanída is alive."

The servant already knew all about it, and told him she had died

an hour ago.

"Well, all right. Now leave me alone. When the police-officer or the magistrate comes, let me know."

The police-officer and magistrate arrived next morning, and Eugène, having bidden his wife and baby farewell, was taken to prison.

He was tried. It was during the early days of trial by jury,[26] and the verdict was one of temporary insanity, and he was sentenced only to perform church penance.

He had been kept in prison for nine months and was then confined in a monastery for one month.

He had begun to drink while still in prison, continued to do so in the monastery, and returned home an enfeebled, irresponsible drunkard.

Varvára Alexéevna assured them that she had always predicted this. It was, she said, evident from the way he disputed. Neither Liza nor Mary Pávlovna could understand how the affair had happened, but for all that, they did not believe what the doctors said, namely, that he was mentally deranged—a psychopath. They could not accept that, for the knew that he was saner than hundreds of their acquaintances.

And indeed, if Eugène Irténev was mentally deranged when he committed this crime, then everyone is similarly insane. The most mentally deranged people are certainly those who see in others indications of insanity they do not notice in themselves.

Father Sergius

I

In Petersburg in the eighteen-forties a surprising event occurred. An officer of the Cuirassier Life Guards, a handsome prince who everyone predicted would become aide-de-camp to the Emperor Nicholas I and have a brilliant career, left the service, broke off his engagement to a beautiful maid of honour, a favourite of the Empress's, gave his small estate to his sister, and retired to a monastery to become a monk.

This event appeared extraordinary and inexplicable to those who did not know his inner motives, but for Prince Stepán Kasátsky himself it all occurred so naturally that he could not imagine how he could have

[26] Trial by jury was introduced in 1864, and at first the juries were inclined to be extremely lenient to the prisoners. —*A. M.*

acted otherwise.

His father, a retired colonel of the Guards, had died when Stepán was twelve, and sorry as his mother was to part from her son, she entered him at the Military College as her deceased husband had intended.

The widow herself, with her daughter, Varvára, moved to Petersburg to be near her son and have him with her for the holidays.

The boy was distinguished both by his brilliant ability and by his immense self-esteem. He was first both in his studies—especially in mathematics, of which he was particularly fond—and also in drill and in riding. Though of more than average height, he was handsome and agile, and he would have been an altogether exemplary cadet had it not been for his quick temper. He was remarkably truthful, and was neither dissipated nor addicted to drink. The only faults that marred his conduct were fits of fury to which he was subject and during which he lost control of himself and became like a wild animal. He once nearly threw out of the window another cadet who had begun to tease him about his collection of minerals. On another occasion he came almost completely to grief by flinging a whole dish of cutlets at an officer who was acting as steward, attacking him and, it was said, striking him for having broken his word and told a barefaced lie. He would certainly have been reduced to the ranks had not the Director of the College hushed up the whole matter and dismissed the steward.

By the time he was eighteen he had finished his College course and received a commission as lieutenant in an aristocratic regiment of the Guards.

The Emperor Nicholas Pávlovich (Nicholas I) had noticed him while he was still at the College, and continued to take notice of him in the regiment, and it was on this account that people predicted for him an appointment as aide-de-camp to the Emperor. Kasátsky himself strongly desired it, not from ambition only but chiefly because since his cadet days he had been passionately devoted to Nicholas Pávlovich. The Emperor had often visited the Military College and every time Kasátsky saw that tall erect figure, with breast expanded in its military overcoat, entering with brisk step, saw the cropped side-whiskers, the moustache, the aquiline nose, and heard the sonorous voice exchanging greetings with the cadets, he was seized by the same rapture that he experienced later on when he met the woman he loved. Indeed, his passionate adoration of the Emperor was even stronger: he wished to sacrifice something—everything, even himself—to prove his complete devotion. And the Emperor Nicholas was conscious of evoking

this rapture and deliberately aroused it. He played with the cadets, surrounded himself with them, treating them sometimes with childish simplicity, sometimes as a friend, and then again with majestic solemnity. After that affair with the officer, Nicholas Pávlovich said nothing to Kasátsky, but when the latter approached he waved him away theatrically, frowned, shook his finger at him, and afterwards when leaving, said: "Remember that I know everything. There are some things I would rather not know, but they remain here," and he pointed to his heart.

When on leaving College the cadets were received by the Emperor, he did not again refer to Kasátsky's offence, but told them all, as was his custom, that they should serve him and the fatherland loyally, that he would always be their best friend, and that when necessary they might approach him direct. All the cadets were as usual greatly moved, and Kasátsky even shed tears, remembering the past, and vowed that he would serve his beloved Tsar with all his soul.

When Kasátsky took up his commission his mother moved with her daughter first to Moscow and then to their country estate. Kasátsky gave half his property to his sister and kept only enough to maintain himself in the expensive regiment he had joined.

To all appearance he was just an ordinary, brilliant young officer of the Guards making a career for himself; but intense and complex strivings went on within him. From early childhood his efforts had seemed to be very varied, but essentially they were all one and the same. He tried in everything he took up to attain such success and perfection as would evoke praise and surprise. Whether it was his studies or his military exercises, he took them up and worked at them till he was praised and held up as an example to others. Mastering one subject he took up another, and obtained first place in his studies. For example, while still at College he noticed in himself an awkwardness in French conversation, and contrived to master French till he spoke it as well as Russian, and then he took up chess and became an excellent player.

Apart from his main vocation, which was the service of his Tsar and the fatherland, he always set himself some particular aim, and however unimportant it was, devoted himself completely to it and lived for it until it was accomplished. And as soon as it was attained another aim would immediately present itself, replacing its predecessor. This passion for distinguishing himself, or for accomplishing something in order to distinguish himself, filled his life. On taking up his commission he set himself to acquire the utmost perfection in knowledge of the

service, and very soon became a model officer, though still with the same fault of ungovernable irascibility, which here in the service again led him to commit actions inimical to his success. Then he took to reading, having once in conversation in society felt himself deficient in general education—and again achieved his purpose. Then, wishing to secure a brilliant position in high society, he learnt to dance excellently and very soon was invited to all the balls in the best circles, and to some of their evening gatherings. But this did not satisfy him: he was accustomed to being first, and in this society was far from being so.

The highest society then consisted, and I think always consist, of four sorts of people: rich people who are received at Court, people not wealthy but born and brought up in Court circles, rich people who ingratiate themselves into the Court set, and people neither rich nor belonging to the Court but who ingratiate themselves into the first and second sets.

Kasátsky did not belong to the first two sets, but was readily welcomed in the others. On entering society he determined to have relations with some society lady, and to his own surprise quickly accomplished this purpose. He soon realized, however, that the circles in which he moved were not the highest, and that though he was received in the highest spheres he did not belong to them. They were polite to him, but showed by their whole manner that they had their own set and that he was not of it. And Kasátsky wished to belong to that inner circle. To attain that end it would be necessary to be an aide-de-camp to the Emperor—which he expected to become—or to marry into that exclusive set, which he resolved to do. And his choice fell on a beauty belonging to the Court, who not merely belonged to the circle into which he wished to be accepted, but whose friendship was coveted by the very highest people and those most firmly established in that highest circle. This was Countess Korotkóva. Kasátsky began to pay court to her, and not merely for the sake of his career. She was extremely attractive and he soon fell in love with her. At first she was noticeably cool towards him, but then suddenly changed and became gracious, and her mother gave him pressing invitations to visit them. Kasátsky proposed and was accepted. He was surprised at the facility with which he attained such happiness. But though he noticed something strange and unusual in the behaviour towards him of both mother and daughter, he was blinded by being so deeply in love, and did not realize what almost the whole town knew—namely, that his fiancée had been the Emperor Nicholas's mistress the previous year.

Two weeks before the day arranged for the wedding, Kasátsky was

at Tsárskoe Seló at his fiancée's country place. It was a hot day in May. He and his betrothed had walked about the garden and were sitting on a bench in a shady linden alley. Mary's white muslin dress suited her particularly well, and she seemed the personification of innocence and love as she sat, now bending her head, now gazing up at the very tall and handsome man who was speaking to her with particular tenderness and self-restraint, as if he feared by word or gesture to offend or sully her angelic purity.

Kasátsky belonged to those men of the eighteen-forties (they are now no longer to be found) who while deliberately and without any conscientious scruples condoning impurity in themselves, required ideal and angelic purity in their women, regarded all unmarried women of their circle as possessed of such purity, and treated them accordingly. There was much that was false and harmful in this outlook, as concerning the laxity the men permitted themselves, but in regard to the women that old-fashioned view (sharply differing from that held by young people today who see in every girl merely a female seeking a mate) was, I think, of value. The girls, perceiving such adoration, endeavoured with more or less success to be goddesses.

Such was the view Kasátsky held of women, and that was how he regarded his fiancée. He was particularly in love that day, but did not experience any sensual desire for her. On the contrary he regarded her with tender adoration as something unattainable.

He rose to his full height, standing before her with both hands on his sabre.

"I have only now realized what happiness a man can experience! And it is you, my darling, who have given me this happiness," he said with a timid smile.

Endearments had not yet become usual between them, and feeling himself morally inferior he felt terrified at this stage to use them to such an angel.

"It is thanks to you that I have come to know myself. I have learnt that I am better than I thought."

"I have known that for a long time. That was why I began to love you."

Nightingales trilled nearby and the fresh leafage rustled, moved by a passing breeze.

He took her hand and kissed it, and tears came into his eyes.

She understood that he was thanking her for having said she loved him. He silently took a few steps up and down, and then approached her again and sat down.

"You know … I have to tell you … I was not disinterested when I began to make love to you. I wanted to get into society; but later … how unimportant that became in comparison with you—when I got to know you. You are not angry with me for that?"

She did not reply but merely touched his hand. He understood that this meant: "No, I am not angry."

"You said …" He hesitated. It seemed too bold to say. "You said that you began to love me. I believe it—but there is something that troubles you and checks your feeling. What is it?"

"Yes—now or never!" thought she. "He is bound to know of it anyway. But now he will not forsake me. Ah, if he should, it would be terrible!" And she threw a loving glance at his tall, noble, powerful figure. She loved him now more than she had loved the Tsar, and apart from the Imperial dignity would not have preferred the Emperor to him.

"Listen! I cannot deceive you. I have to tell you. You ask what it is? It is that I have loved before."

She again laid her hand on his with an imploring gesture. He was silent.

"You want to know who it was? It was—the Emperor."

"We all love him. I can imagine you, a schoolgirl at the Institute …"

"No, it was later. I was infatuated, but it passed … I must tell you …"

"Well, what of it?"

"No, it was not simply—" She covered her face with her hands.

"What? You gave yourself to him?"

She was silent.

"His mistress?"

She did not answer.

He sprang up and stood before her with trembling jaws, pale as death. He now remembered how the Emperor, meeting him on the Névsky, had amiably congratulated him.

"O God, what have I done! Stíva!"

"Don't touch me! Don't touch me! Oh, how it pains!"

He turned away and went to the house. There he met her mother.

"What is the matter, Prince? I …" She became silent on seeing his face. The blood had suddenly rushed to his head.

"You knew it, and used me to shield them! If you weren't a woman … !" he cried, lifting his enormous fist, and turning aside he ran away.

Had his fiancée's lover been a private person he would have killed

him, but it was his beloved Tsar.

Next day he applied both for furlough and his discharge, and professing to be ill, so as to see no one, he went away to the country.

He spent the summer at his village arranging his affairs. When summer was over he did not return to Petersburg, but entered a monastery and there became a monk.

His mother wrote to try to dissuade him from this decisive step, but he replied that he felt God's call which transcended all other considerations. Only his sister, who was as proud and ambitious as he, understood him.

She understood that he had become a monk in order to be above those who considered themselves his superiors. And she understood him correctly. By becoming a monk he showed contempt for all that seemed most important to others and had seemed so to him while he was in the service, and he now ascended a height from which he could look down on those he had formerly envied. … But it was not this alone, as his sister Varvára supposed, that influenced him. There was also in him something else—a sincere religious feeling which Varvára did not know, which intertwined itself with the feeling of pride and the desire for preeminence, and guided him. His disillusionment with Mary, whom he had thought of angelic purity, and his sense of injury, were so strong that they brought him to despair, and the despair led him—to what? To God, to his childhood's faith which had never been destroyed in him.

II

Kasátsky entered the monastery on the feast of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin.[27] The Abbot of that monastery was a gentleman by birth, a learned writer and a starets, that is, he belonged to that succession of monks originating in Walachia who each choose a director and teacher whom they implicitly obey. This Superior had been a disciple of the starets Ambrose, who was a disciple of Makarius, who was a disciple of the starets Leonid, who was a disciple of Païssy Velichkóvsky.

To this Abbot Kasátsky submitted himself as to his chosen director. Here in the monastery, besides the feeling of ascendency over others that such a life gave him, he felt much as he had done in the world: he found satisfaction in attaining the greatest possible perfection out-

[27] 1st October o.s. —*A. M.*

wardly as well as inwardly. As in the regiment he had been not merely an irreproachable officer but had even exceeded his duties and widened the borders of perfection, so also as a monk he tried to be perfect, and was always industrious, abstemious, submissive, and meek, as well as pure both in deed and in thought, and obedient. This last quality in particular made life far easier for him. If many of the demands of life in the monastery, which was near the capital and much frequented, did not please him and were temptations to him, they were all nullified by obedience: "It is not for me to reason; my business is to do the task set me, whether it be standing beside the relics, singing in the choir, or making up accounts in the monastery guesthouse." All possibility of doubt about anything was silenced by obedience to the starets. Had it not been for this, he would have been oppressed by the length and monotony of the church services, the bustle of the many visitors, and the bad qualities of the other monks. As it was, he not only bore it all joyfully but found in it solace and support. "I don't know why it is necessary to hear the same prayers several times a day, but I know that it is necessary; and knowing this I find joy in them." His director told him that as material food is necessary for the maintenance of the life of the body, so spiritual food—the church prayers—is necessary for the maintenance of the spiritual life. He believed this, and though the church services, for which he had to get up early in the morning, were a difficulty, they certainly calmed him and gave him joy. This was the result of his consciousness of humility, and the certainty that whatever he had to do, being fixed by the starets, was right.

The interest of his life consisted not only in an ever greater and greater subjugation of his will, but in the attainment of all the Christian virtues, which at first seemed to him easily attainable. He had given his whole estate to his sister and did not regret it, he had no personal claims, humility towards his inferiors was not merely easy for him but afforded him pleasure. Even victory over the sins of the flesh, greed and lust, was easily attained. His director had specially warned him against the latter sin, but Kasátsky felt free from it and was glad.

One thing only tormented him—the remembrance of his fiancée; and not merely the remembrance but the vivid image of what might have been. Involuntarily he recalled a lady he knew who had been a favourite of the Emperor's, but had afterwards married and become an admirable wife and mother. The husband had a high position, influence and honour, and a good and penitent wife.

In his better hours Kasátsky was not disturbed by such thoughts, and when he recalled them at such times he was merely glad to feel

that the temptation was past. But there were moments when all that made up his present life suddenly grew dim before him, moments when, if he did not cease to believe in the aims he had set himself, he ceased to see them and could evoke no confidence in them but was seized by a remembrance of, and—terrible to say—a regret for, the change of life he had made.

The only thing that saved him in that state of mind was obedience and work, and the fact that the whole day was occupied by prayer. He went through the usual forms of prayer, he bowed in prayer, he even prayed more than usual, but it was lip-service only and his soul was not in it. This condition would continue for a day, or sometimes for two days, and would then pass of itself. But those days were dreadful. Kasátsky felt that he was neither in his own hands nor in God's, but was subject to something else. All he could do then was to obey the starets, to restrain himself, to undertake nothing, and simply to wait. In general all this time he lived not by his own will but by that of the starets, and in this obedience he found a special tranquillity.

So he lived in his first monastery for seven years. At the end of the third year he received the tonsure and was ordained to the priesthood by the name of Sergius. The profession was an important event in his inner life. He had previously experienced a great consolation and spiritual exaltation when receiving communion, and now when he himself officiated, the performance of the preparation filled him with ecstatic and deep emotion. But subsequently that feeling became more and more deadened, and once when he was officiating in a depressed state of mind he felt that the influence produced on him by the service would not endure. And it did in fact weaken till only the habit remained.

In general in the seventh year of his life in the monastery Sergius grew weary. He had learnt all there was to learn and had attained all there was to attain, there was nothing more to do and his spiritual drowsiness increased. During this time he heard of his mother's death and his sister Varvára's marriage, but both events were matters of indifference to him. His whole attention and his whole interest were concentrated on his inner life.

In the fourth year of his priesthood, during which the Bishop had been particularly kind to him, the starets told him that he ought not to decline it if he were offered an appointment to higher duties. Then monastic ambition, the very thing he had found so repulsive in other monks, arose within him. He was assigned to a monastery near the metropolis. He wished to refuse but the starets ordered him to accept the appointment. He did so, and took leave of the starets and moved

to the other monastery.

The exchange into the metropolitan monastery was an important event in Sergius's life. There he encountered many temptations, and his whole willpower was concentrated on meeting them.

In the first monastery, women had not been a temptation to him, but here that temptation arose with terrible strength and even took definite shape. There was a lady known for her frivolous behaviour who began to seek his favour. She talked to him and asked him to visit her. Sergius sternly declined, but was horrified by the definiteness of his desire. He was so alarmed that he wrote about it to the starets. And in addition, to keep himself in hand, he spoke to a young novice and, conquering his sense of shame, confessed his weakness to him, asking him to keep watch on him and not let him go anywhere except to service and to fulfil his duties.

Besides this, a great pitfall for Sergius lay in the fact of his extreme antipathy to his new Abbot, a cunning worldly man who was making a career for himself in the Church. Struggle with himself as he might, he could not master that feeling. He was submissive to the Abbot, but in the depths of his soul he never ceased to condemn him. And in the second year of his residence at the new monastery that ill-feeling broke out.

The Vigil service was being performed in the large church on the eve of the feast of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and there were many visitors. The Abbot himself was conducting the service. Father Sergius was standing in his usual place and praying: that is, he was in that condition of struggle which always occupied him during the service, especially in the large church when he was not himself conducting the service. This conflict was occasioned by his irritation at the presence of fine folk, especially ladies. He tried not to see them or to notice all that went on: how a soldier conducted them, pushing the common people aside, how the ladies pointed out the monks to one another—especially himself and a monk noted for his good looks. He tried as it were to keep his mind in blinkers, to see nothing but the light of the candles on the altar-screen, the icons, and those conducting the service. He tried to hear nothing but the prayers that were being chanted or read, to feel nothing but self-oblivion in consciousness of the fulfilment of duty—a feeling he always experienced when hearing or reciting in advance the prayers he had so often heard.

So he stood, crossing and prostrating himself when necessary, and struggled with himself, now giving way to cold condemnation and now to a consciously evoked obliteration of thought and feeling. Then the

sacristan, Father Nicodemus—also a great stumbling-block to Sergius who involuntarily reproached him for flattering and fawning on the Abbot—approached him and, bowing low, requested his presence behind the holy gates. Father Sergius straightened his mantle, put on his biretta, and went circumspectly through the crowd.

"*Lise, regarde à droite, c'est lui!*"[28] he heard a woman's voice say.

"*Où, où? Il n'est pas tellement beau.*"[29]

He knew that they were speaking of him. He heard them and, as always at moments of temptation, he repeated the words, "Lead us not into temptation," and bowing his head and lowering his eyes went past the ambo and in by the north door, avoiding the canons in their cassocks who were just then passing the altar-screen. On entering the sanctuary he bowed, crossing himself as usual and bending double before the icons. Then, raising his head but without turning, he glanced out of the corner of his eye at the Abbot, whom he saw standing beside another glittering figure.

The Abbot was standing by the wall in his vestments. Having freed his short plump hands from beneath his chasuble he had folded them over his fat body and protruding stomach, and fingering the cords of his vestments was smilingly saying something to a military man in the uniform of a general of the Imperial suite, with its insignia and shoulder-knots which Father Sergius's experienced eye at once recognized. This general had been the commander of the regiment in which Sergius had served. He now evidently occupied an important position, and Father Sergius at once noticed that the Abbot was aware of this and that his red face and bald head beamed with satisfaction and pleasure. This vexed and disgusted Father Sergius, the more so when he heard that the Abbot had only sent for him to satisfy the general's curiosity to see a man who had formerly served with him, as he expressed it.

"Very pleased to see you in your angelic guise," said the general, holding out his hand. "I hope you have not forgotten an old comrade."

The whole thing—the Abbot's red, smiling face amid its fringe of grey, the general's words, his well-cared-for face with its self-satisfied smile and the smell of wine from his breath and of cigars from his whiskers—revolted Father Sergius. He bowed again to the Abbot and said:

"Your reverence deigned to send for me?"—and stopped, the whole

[28] "Lise, look to the right. That is he."

[29] "Where? Where? He is not so very handsome."

expression of his face and eyes asking why.

"Yes, to meet the General," replied the Abbot.

"Your reverence, I left the world to save myself from temptation," said Father Sergius, turning pale and with quivering lips. "Why do you expose me to it during prayers and in God's house?"

"You may go! Go!" said the Abbot, flaring up and frowning.

Next day Father Sergius asked pardon of the Abbot and of the brethren for his pride, but at the same time, after a night spent in prayer, he decided that he must leave this monastery, and he wrote to the starets begging permission to return to him. He wrote that he felt his weakness and incapacity to struggle against temptation without his help and penitently confessed his sin of pride. By return of post came a letter from the starets, who wrote that Sergius's pride was the cause of all that had happened. The old man pointed out that his fits of anger were due to the fact that in refusing all clerical honours he humiliated himself not for the sake of God but for the sake of his pride. "There now, am I not a splendid man not to want anything?" That was why he could not tolerate the Abbot's action. "I have renounced everything for the glory of God, and here I am exhibited like a wild beast!" "Had you renounced vanity for God's sake you would have borne it. Worldly pride is not yet dead in you. I have thought about you, Sergius my son, and prayed also, and this is what God has suggested to me. At the Tambóv hermitage the anchorite Hilary, a man of saintly life, has died. He had lived there eighteen years. The Tambóv Abbot is asking whether there is not a brother who would take his place. And here comes your letter. Go to Father Païssy of the Tambóv Monastery. I will write to him about you, and you must ask for Hilary's cell. Not that you can replace Hilary, but you need solitude to quell your pride. May God bless you!"

Sergius obeyed the starets, showed his letter to the Abbot, and having obtained his permission, gave up his cell, handed all his possessions over to the monastery, and set out for the Tambóv hermitage.

There the Abbot, an excellent manager of merchant origin, received Sergius simply and quietly and placed him in Hilary's cell, at first assigning to him a lay brother but afterwards leaving him alone, at Sergius's own request. The cell was a dual cave, dug into the hillside, and in it Hilary had been buried. In the back part was Hilary's grave, while in the front was a niche for sleeping, with a straw mattress, a small table, and a shelf with icons and books. Outside the outer door, which fastened with a hook, was another shelf on which, once a day, a monk placed food from the monastery.

And so Sergius became a hermit.

III

At Carnival time, in the sixth year of Sergius's life at the hermitage, a merry company of rich people, men and women from a neighbouring town, made up a troika-party, after a meal of carnival-pancakes and wine. The company consisted of two lawyers, a wealthy landowner, an officer, and four ladies. One lady was the officer's wife, another the wife of the landowner, the third his sister—a young girl—and the fourth a divorcee, beautiful, rich, and eccentric, who amazed and shocked the town by her escapades.

The weather was excellent and the snow-covered road smooth as a floor. They drove some seven miles out of town, and then stopped and consulted as to whether they should turn back or drive farther.

"But where does this road lead to?" asked Makóvkina, the beautiful divorcee.

"To Tambóv, eight miles from here," replied one of the lawyers, who was having a flirtation with her.

"And then where?"

"Then on to L——, past the Monastery."

"Where that Father Sergius lives?"

"Yes."

"Kasátsky, the handsome hermit?"

"Yes."

"*Mesdames et messieurs*, let us drive on and see Kasátsky! We can stop at Tambóv and have something to eat."

"But we shouldn't get home tonight!"

"Never mind, we will stay at Kasátsky's."

"Well, there is a very good hostelry at the Monastery. I stayed there when I was defending Mákhin."

"No, I shall spend the night at Kasátsky's!"

"Impossible! Even your omnipotence could not accomplish that!"

"Impossible? Will you bet?"

"All right! If you spend the night with him, the stake shall be whatever you like."

"A *discrétion*!"

"But on your side too!"

"Yes, of course. Let us drive on."

Vodka was handed to the drivers, and the party got out a box

of pies, wine, and sweets for themselves. The ladies wrapped up in their white dogskins. The drivers disputed as to whose troika should go ahead, and the youngest, seating himself sideways with a dashing air, swung his long knout and shouted to the horses. The troika-bells tinkled and the sledge-runners squeaked over the snow.

The sledge swayed hardly at all. The shaft-horse, with his tightly bound tail under his decorated breechband, galloped smoothly and briskly; the smooth road seemed to run rapidly backwards, while the driver dashingly shook the reins. One of the lawyers and the officer sitting opposite talked nonsense to Makóvkina's neighbour, but Makóvkina herself sat motionless and in thought, tightly wrapped in her fur. "Always the same and always nasty! The same red shiny faces smelling of wine and cigars! The same talk, the same thoughts, and always about the same things! And they are all satisfied and confident that it should be so, and will go on living like that till they die. But I can't. It bores me. I want something that would upset it all and turn it upside down. Suppose it happened to us as to those people—at Sarátov was it?—who kept on driving and froze to death. … What would our people do? How would they behave? Basely, for certain. Each for himself. And I too should act badly. But I at any rate have beauty. They all know it. And how about that monk? Is it possible that he has become indifferent to it? No! That is the one thing they all care for—like that cadet last autumn. What a fool he was!"

"Iván Nikoláevich!" she said aloud.

"What are your commands?"

"How old is he?"

"Who?"

"Kasátsky."

"Over forty, I should think."

"And does he receive all visitors?"

"Yes, everybody, but not always."

"Cover up my feet. Not like that—how clumsy you are! No! More, more—like that! But you need not squeeze them!"

So they came to the forest where the cell was.

Makóvkina got out of the sledge, and told them to drive on. They tried to dissuade her, but she grew irritable and ordered them to go on.

When the sledges had gone she went up the path in her white dogskin coat. The lawyer got out and stopped to watch her.

It was Father Sergius's sixth year as a recluse, and he was now forty-nine. His life in solitude was hard—not on account of the fasts

and the prayers (they were no hardship to him) but on account of an inner conflict he had not at all anticipated. The sources of that conflict were two: doubts, and the lust of the flesh. And these two enemies always appeared together. It seemed to him that they were two foes, but in reality they were one and the same. As soon as doubt was gone so was the lustful desire. But thinking them to be two different fiends he fought them separately.

"O my God, my God!" thought he. "Why dost thou not grant me faith? There is lust, of course: even the saints had to fight that—Saint Anthony and others. But they had faith, while I have moments, hours, and days, when it is absent. Why does the whole world, with all its delights, exist if it is sinful and must be renounced? Why hast Thou created this temptation? Temptation? Is it not rather a temptation that I wish to abandon all the joys of earth and prepare something for myself there where perhaps there is nothing?" And he became horrified and filled with disgust at himself. "Vile creature! And it is you who wish to become a saint!" he upbraided himself, and he began to pray. But as soon as he started to pray he saw himself vividly as he had been at the Monastery, in a majestic post in biretta and mantle, and he shook his head. "No, that is not right. It is deception. I may deceive others, but not myself or God. I am not a majestic man, but a pitiable and ridiculous one!" And he threw back the folds of his cassock and smiled as he looked at his thin legs in their underclothing.

Then he dropped the folds of the cassock again and began reading the prayers, making the sign of the cross and prostrating himself. "Can it be that this couch will be my bier?" he read. And it seemed as if a devil whispered to him: "A solitary couch is itself a bier. Falsehood!" And in imagination he saw the shoulders of a widow with whom he had lived. He shook himself, and went on reading. Having read the precepts he took up the Gospels, opened the book, and happened on a passage he often repeated and knew by heart: "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief!"—and he put away all the doubts that had arisen. As one replaces an object of insecure equilibrium, so he carefully replaced his belief on its shaky pedestal and carefully stepped back from it so as not to shake or upset it. The blinkers were adjusted again and he felt tranquillized, and repeating his childhood's prayer: "Lord, receive me, receive me!" he felt not merely at ease, but thrilled and joyful. He crossed himself and lay down on the bedding on his narrow bench, tucking his summer cassock under his head. He fell asleep at once, and in his light slumber he seemed to hear the tinkling of sledge bells. He did not know whether he was dreaming or awake, but a knock at the

door aroused him. He sat up, distrusting his senses, but the knock was repeated. Yes, it was a knock close at hand, at his door, and with it the sound of a woman's voice.

"My God! Can it be true, as I have read in the *Lives of the Saints*, that the devil takes on the form of a woman? Yes—it is a woman's voice. And a tender, timid, pleasant voice. Phui!" And he spat to exorcise the devil. "No, it was only my imagination," he assured himself, and he went to the corner where his lectern stood, falling on his knees in the regular and habitual manner which of itself gave him consolation and satisfaction. He sank down, his hair hanging over his face, and pressed his head, already going bald in front, to the cold damp strip of drugget on the draughty floor. He read the psalm old Father Pímon had told him warded off temptation. He easily raised his light and emaciated body on his strong sinewy legs and tried to continue saying his prayers, but instead of doing so he involuntarily strained his hearing. He wished to hear more. All was quiet. From the corner of the roof regular drops continued to fall into the tub below. Outside was a mist and fog eating into the snow that lay on the ground. It was still, very still. And suddenly there was a rustling at the window and a voice—that same tender, timid voice, which could only belong to an attractive woman—said:

"Let me in, for Christ's sake!"

It seemed as though his blood had all rushed to his heart and settled there. He could hardly breathe. "Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered …"

"But I am not a devil!" It was obvious that the lips that uttered this were smiling. "I am not a devil, but only a sinful woman who has lost her way, not figuratively but literally!" She laughed. "I am frozen and beg for shelter."

He pressed his face to the window, but the little icon-lamp was reflected by it and shone on the whole pane. He put his hands to both sides of his face and peered between them. Fog, mist, a tree, and—just opposite him—she herself. Yes, there, a few inches from him, was the sweet, kindly frightened face of a woman in a cap and a coat of long white fur, leaning towards him. Their eyes met with instant recognition: not that they had ever known one another, they had never met before, but by the look they exchanged they—and he particularly—felt that they knew and understood one another. After that glance to imagine her to be a devil and not a simple, kindly, sweet, timid woman, was impossible.

"Who are you? Why have you come?" he asked.

"Do please open the door!" she replied, with capricious authority. "I am frozen. I tell you I have lost my way."

"But I am a monk—a hermit."

"Oh, do please open the door—or do you wish me to freeze under your window while you say your prayers?"

"But how have you …"

"I shan't eat you. For God's sake let me in! I am quite frozen."

She really did feel afraid, and said this in an almost tearful voice.

He stepped back from the window and looked at an icon of the Saviour in His crown of thorns. "Lord, help me! Lord, help me!" he exclaimed, crossing himself and bowing low. Then he went to the door, and opening it into the tiny porch, felt for the hook that fastened the outer door and began to lift it. He heard steps outside. She was coming from the window to the door. "Ah!" she suddenly exclaimed, and he understood that she had stepped into the puddle that the dripping from the roof had formed at the threshold. His hands trembled, and he could not raise the hook of the tightly closed door.

"Oh, what are you doing? Let me in! I am all wet. I am frozen! You are thinking about saving your soul and are letting me freeze to death …"

He jerked the door towards him, raised the hook, and without considering what he was doing, pushed it open with such force that it struck her.

"Oh—*pardon*!" he suddenly exclaimed, reverting completely to his old manner with ladies.

She smiled on hearing that *pardon*. "He is not quite so terrible, after all," she thought. "It's all right. It is you who must pardon me," she said, stepping past him. "I should never have ventured, but such an extraordinary circumstance …"

"If you please!" he uttered, and stood aside to let her pass him. A strong smell of fine scent, which he had long not encountered, struck him. She went through the little porch into the cell where he lived. He closed the outer door without fastening the hook, and stepped in after her.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner! Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!" he prayed unceasingly, not merely to himself but involuntarily moving his lips. "If you please!" he said to her again. She stood in the middle of the room, moisture dripping from her to the floor as she looked him over. Her eyes were laughing.

"Forgive me for having disturbed your solitude. But you see what a position I am in. It all came about from our starting from town for

a sledge-drive, and my making a bet that I would walk back by myself from the Vorobëvka to the town. But then I lost my way, and if I had not happened to come upon your cell …" She began lying, but his face confused her so that she could not continue, but became silent. She had not expected him to be at all such as he was. He was not as handsome as she had imagined, but was nevertheless beautiful in her eyes: his greyish hair and beard, slightly curling, his fine, regular nose, and his eyes like glowing coal when he looked at her, made a strong impression on her.

He saw that she was lying.

"Yes … so," said he, looking at her and again lowering his eyes. "I will go in there, and this place is at your disposal."

And taking down the little lamp, he lit a candle, and bowing low to her went into the small cell beyond the partition, and she heard him begin to move something about there. "Probably he is barricading himself in from me!" she thought with a smile, and throwing off her white dogskin cloak she tried to take off her cap, which had become entangled in her hair and in the woven kerchief she was wearing under it. She had not got at all wet when standing under the window, and had said so only as a pretext to get him to let her in. But she really had stepped into the puddle at the door, and her left foot was wet up to the ankle and her overshoe full of water. She sat down on his bed—a bench only covered by a bit of carpet—and began to take off her boots. The little cell seemed to her charming. The narrow little room, some seven feet by nine, was as clean as glass. There was nothing in it but the bench on which she was sitting, the bookshelf above it, and a lectern in the corner. A sheepskin coat and a cassock hung on nails by the door. Above the lectern was the little lamp and an icon of Christ in His crown of thorns. The room smelt strangely of perspiration and of earth. It all pleased her—even that smell. Her wet feet, especially one of them, were uncomfortable, and she quickly began to take off her boots and stockings without ceasing to smile, pleased not so much at having achieved her object as because she perceived that she had abashed that charming, strange, striking, and attractive man. "He did not respond, but what of that?" she said to herself.

"Father Sergius! Father Sergius! Or how does one call you?"

"What do you want?" replied a quiet voice.

"Please forgive me for disturbing your solitude, but really I could not help it. I should simply have fallen ill. And I don't know that I shan't now. I am all wet and my feet are like ice."

"Pardon me," replied the quiet voice. "I cannot be of any assistance

to you."

"I would not have disturbed you if I could have helped it. I am only here till daybreak."

He did not reply and she heard him muttering something, probably his prayers.

"You will not be coming in here?" she asked, smiling. "For I must undress to dry myself."

He did not reply, but continued to read his prayers.

"Yes, that is a man!" thought she, getting her dripping boot off with difficulty. She tugged at it, but could not get it off. The absurdity of it struck her and she began to laugh almost inaudibly. But knowing that he would hear her laughter and would be moved by it just as she wished him to be, she laughed louder, and her laughter—gay, natural, and kindly—really acted on him just in the way she wished.

"Yes, I could love a man like that—such eyes and such a simple noble face, and passionate too despite all the prayers he mutters!" thought she. "You can't deceive a woman in these things. As soon as he put his face to the window and saw me, he understood and knew. The glimmer of it was in his eyes and remained there. He began to love me and desired me. Yes—desired!" said she, getting her overshoe and her boot off at last and starting to take off her stockings. To remove those long stockings fastened with elastic it was necessary to raise her skirts. She felt embarrassed and said:

"Don't come in!"

But there was no reply from the other side of the wall. The steady muttering continued and also a sound of moving.

"He is prostrating himself to the ground, no doubt," thought she. "But he won't bow himself out of it. He is thinking of me just as I am thinking of him. He is thinking of these feet of mine with the same feeling that I have!" And she pulled off her wet stockings and put her feet up on the bench, pressing them under her. She sat a while like that with her arms round her knees and looking pensively before her. "But it is a desert, here in this silence. No one would ever know. …"

She rose, took her stockings over to the stove, and hung them on the damper. It was a queer damper, and she turned it about, and then, stepping lightly on her bare feet, returned to the bench and sat down there again with her feet up.

There was complete silence on the other side of the partition. She looked at the tiny watch that hung round her neck. It was two o'clock. "Our party should return about three!" She had not more than an hour before her. "Well, am I to sit like this all alone? What nonsense!

I don't want to. I will call him at once."

"Father Sergius, Father Sergius! Sergéy Dmítrich! Prince Kasátsky!"

Beyond the partition all was silent.

"Listen! This is cruel. I would not call you if it were not necessary. I am ill. I don't know what is the matter with me!" she exclaimed in a tone of suffering. "Oh! Oh!" she groaned, falling back on the bench. And strange to say she really felt that her strength was failing, that she was becoming faint, that everything in her ached, and that she was shivering with fever.

"Listen! Help me! I don't know what is the matter with me. Oh! Oh!" She unfastened her dress, exposing her breast, and lifted her arms, bare to the elbow. "Oh! Oh!"

All this time he stood on the other side of the partition and prayed. Having finished all the evening prayers, he now stood motionless, his eyes looking at the end of his nose, and mentally repeated with all his soul: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me!"

But he had heard everything. He had heard how the silk rustled when she took off her dress, how she stepped with bare feet on the floor, and had heard how she rubbed her feet with her hand. He felt his own weakness, and that he might be lost at any moment. That was why he prayed unceasingly. He felt rather as the hero in the fairytale must have felt when he had to go on and on without looking round. So Sergius heard and felt that danger and destruction were there, hovering above and around him, and that he could only save himself by not looking in that direction for an instant. But suddenly the desire to look seized him. At the same instant she said:

"This is inhuman. I may die. …"

"Yes, I will go to her, but like the Saint who laid one hand on the adulteress and thrust his other into the brazier. But there is no brazier here." He looked round. The lamp! He put his finger over the flame and frowned, preparing himself to suffer. And for a rather long time, as it seemed to him, there was no sensation, but suddenly—he had not yet decided whether it was painful enough—he writhed all over, jerked his hand away, and waved it in the air. "No, I can't stand that!"

"For God's sake come to me! I am dying! Oh!"

"Well—shall I perish? No, not so!"

"I will come to you directly," he said, and having opened his door, he went without looking at her through the cell into the porch where he used to chop wood. There he felt for the block and for an axe which leant against the wall.

"Immediately!" he said, and taking up the axe with his right hand he laid the forefinger of his left hand on the block, swung the axe, and struck with it below the second joint. The finger flew off more lightly than a stick of similar thickness, and bounding up, turned over on the edge of the block and then fell to the floor.

He heard it fall before he felt any pain, but before he had time to be surprised he felt a burning pain and the warmth of flowing blood. He hastily wrapped the stump in the skirt of his cassock, and pressing it to his hip went back into the room, and standing in front of the woman, lowered his eyes and asked in a low voice: "What do you want?"

She looked at his pale face and his quivering left cheek, and suddenly felt ashamed. She jumped up, seized her fur cloak, and throwing it round her shoulders, wrapped herself up in it.

"I was in pain … I have caught cold … I … Father Sergius … I …"

He let his eyes, shining with a quiet light of joy, rest upon her, and said:

"Dear sister, why did you wish to ruin your immortal soul? Temptations must come into the world, but woe to him by whom temptation comes. Pray that God may forgive us!"

She listened and looked at him. Suddenly she heard the sound of something dripping. She looked down and saw that blood was flowing from his hand and down his cassock.

"What have you done to your hand?" She remembered the sound she had heard, and seizing the little lamp ran out into the porch. There on the floor she saw the bloody finger. She returned with her face paler than his and was about to speak to him, but he silently passed into the back cell and fastened the door.

"Forgive me!" she said. "How can I atone for my sin?"

"Go away."

"Let me tie up your hand."

"Go away from here."

She dressed hurriedly and silently, and when ready sat waiting in her furs. The sledge-bells were heard outside.

"Father Sergius, forgive me!"

"Go away. God will forgive."

"Father Sergius! I will change my life. Do not forsake me!"

"Go away."

"Forgive me—and give me your blessing!"

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!"—she heard his voice from behind the partition. "Go!"

She burst into sobs and left the cell. The lawyer came forward to

meet her.

"Well, I see I have lost the bet. It can't be helped. Where will you sit?"

"It is all the same to me."

She took a seat in the sledge, and did not utter a word all the way home.

A year later she entered a convent as a novice, and lived a strict life under the direction of the hermit Arsény, who wrote letters to her at long intervals.

IV

Father Sergius lived as a recluse for another seven years.

At first he accepted much of what people brought him—tea, sugar, white bread, milk, clothing, and firewood. But as time went on he led a more and more austere life, refusing everything superfluous, and finally he accepted nothing but rye-bread once a week. Everything else that was brought to him he gave to the poor who came to him. He spent his entire time in his cell, in prayer or in conversation with callers, who became more and more numerous as time went on. Only three times a year did he go out to church, and when necessary he went out to fetch water and wood.

The episode with Makóvkina had occurred after five years of his hermit life. That occurrence soon became generally known—her nocturnal visit, the change she underwent, and her entry into a convent. From that time Father Sergius's fame increased. More and more visitors came to see him, other monks settled down near his cell, and a church was erected there and also a hostelry. His fame, as usual exaggerating his feats, spread ever more and more widely. People began to come to him from a distance, and began bringing invalids to him whom they declared he cured.

His first cure occurred in the eighth year of his life as a hermit. It was the healing of a fourteen-year-old boy, whose mother brought him to Father Sergius insisting that he should lay his hand on the child's head. It had never occurred to Father Sergius that he could cure the sick. He would have regarded such a thought as a great sin of pride; but the mother who brought the boy implored him insistently, falling at his feet and saying: "Why do you, who heal others, refuse to help my son?" She besought him in Christ's name. When Father Sergius assured her that only God could heal the sick, she replied that

she only wanted him to lay his hands on the boy and pray for him. Father Sergius refused and returned to his cell. But next day (it was in autumn and the nights were already cold) on going out for water he saw the same mother with her son, a pale boy of fourteen, and was met by the same petition.

He remembered the parable of the unjust judge, and though he had previously felt sure that he ought to refuse, he now began to hesitate and, having hesitated, took to prayer and prayed until a decision formed itself in his soul. This decision was, that he ought to accede to the woman's request and that her faith might save her son. As for himself, he would in this case be but an insignificant instrument chosen by God.

And going out to the mother he did what she asked—laid his hand on the boy's head and prayed.

The mother left with her son, and a month later the boy recovered, and the fame of the holy healing power of the starets Sergius (as they now called him) spread throughout the whole district. After that, not a week passed without sick people coming, riding or on foot, to Father Sergius; and having acceded to one petition he could not refuse others, and he laid his hands on many and prayed. Many recovered, and his fame spread more and more.

So seven years passed in the Monastery and thirteen in his hermit's cell. He now had the appearance of an old man: his beard was long and grey, but his hair, though thin, was still black and curly.

V

For some weeks Father Sergius had been living with one persistent thought: whether he was right in accepting the position in which he had not so much placed himself as been placed by the Archimandrite and the Abbot. That position had begun after the recovery of the fourteen-year-old boy. From that time, with each month, week, and day that passed, Sergius felt his own inner life wasting away and being replaced by external life. It was as if he had been turned inside out.

Sergius saw that he was a means of attracting visitors and contributions to the monastery, and that therefore the authorities arranged matters in such a way as to make as much use of him as possible. For instance, they rendered it impossible for him to do any manual work. He was supplied with everything he could want, and they only demanded of him that he should not refuse his blessing to those who came to seek

it. For his convenience they appointed days when he would receive. They arranged a reception-room for men, and a place was railed in so that he should not be pushed over by the crowds of women visitors, and so that he could conveniently bless those who came.

They told him that people needed him, and that fulfilling Christ's law of love he could not refuse their demand to see him, and that to avoid them would be cruel. He could not but agree with this, but the more he gave himself up to such a life the more he felt that what was internal became external, and that the fount of living water within him dried up, and that what he did now was done more and more for men and less and less for God.

Whether he admonished people, or simply blessed them, or prayed for the sick, or advised people about their lives, or listened to expressions of gratitude from those he had helped by precepts, or alms, or healing (as they assured him)—he could not help being pleased at it, and could not be indifferent to the results of his activity and to the influence he exerted. He thought himself a shining light, and the more he felt this the more was he conscious of a weakening, a dying down of the divine light of truth that shone within him.

"In how far is what I do for God and in how far is it for men?" That was the question that insistently tormented him and to which he was not so much unable to give himself an answer as unable to face the answer.

In the depth of his soul he felt that the devil had substituted an activity for men in place of his former activity for God. He felt this because, just as it had formerly been hard for him to be torn from his solitude so now that solitude itself was hard for him. He was oppressed and wearied by visitors, but at the bottom of his heart he was glad of their presence and glad of the praise they heaped upon him.

There was a time when he decided to go away and hide. He even planned all that was necessary for that purpose. He prepared for himself a peasant's shirt, trousers, coat, and cap. He explained that he wanted these to give to those who asked. And he kept these clothes in his cell, planning how he would put them on, cut his hair short, and go away. First he would go some three hundred versts by train, then he would leave the train and walk from village to village. He asked an old man who had been a soldier how he tramped: what people gave him, and what shelter they allowed him. The soldier told him where people were most charitable, and where they would take a wanderer in for the night, and Father Sergius intended to avail himself of this information. He even put on those clothes one night in his desire to go, but he could

not decide what was best—to remain or to escape. At first he was in doubt, but afterwards this indecision passed. He submitted to custom and yielded to the devil, and only the peasant garb reminded him of the thought and feeling he had had.

Every day more and more people flocked to him and less and less time was left him for prayer and for renewing his spiritual strength. Sometimes in lucid moments he thought he was like a place where there had once been a spring. "There used to be a feeble spring of living water which flowed quietly from me and through me. That was true life, the time when she tempted me!" (He always thought with ecstasy of that night and of her who was now Mother Agnes.) She had tasted of that pure water, but since then there had not been time for it to collect before thirsty people came crowding in and pushing one another aside. And they had trampled everything down and nothing was left but mud.

So he thought in rare moments of lucidity, but his usual state of mind was one of weariness and a tender pity for himself because of that weariness.

It was in spring, on the eve of the mid-Pentecostal feast. Father Sergius was officiating at the Vigil Service in his hermitage church, where the congregation was as large as the little church could hold—about twenty people. They were all well-to-do proprietors or merchants. Father Sergius admitted anyone, but a selection was made by the monk in attendance and by an assistant who was sent to the hermitage every day from the monastery. A crowd of some eighty people—pilgrims and peasants, and especially peasant-women—stood outside waiting for Father Sergius to come out and bless them. Meanwhile he conducted the service, but at the point at which he went out to the tomb of his predecessor, he staggered and would have fallen had he not been caught by a merchant standing behind him and by the monk acting as deacon.

"What is the matter, Father Sergius? Dear man! O Lord!" exclaimed the women. "He is as white as a sheet!"

But Father Sergius recovered immediately, and though very pale, he waved the merchant and the deacon aside and continued to chant the service.

Father Seraphim, the deacon, the acolytes, and Sófya Ivánovna, a lady who always lived near the hermitage and tended Father Sergius, begged him to bring the service to an end.

"No, there's nothing the matter," said Father Sergius, slightly smiling from beneath his moustache and continuing the service. "Yes, that

is the way the Saints behave!" thought he.

"A holy man—an angel of God!" he heard just then the voice of Sófya Ivánovna behind him, and also of the merchant who had supported him. He did not heed their entreaties, but went on with the service. Again crowding together they all made their way by the narrow passages back into the little church, and there, though abbreviating it slightly, Father Sergius completed vespers.

Immediately after the service Father Sergius, having pronounced the benediction on those present, went over to the bench under the elm tree at the entrance to the cave. He wished to rest and breathe the fresh air—he felt in need of it. But as soon as he left the church the crowd of people rushed to him soliciting his blessing, his advice, and his help. There were pilgrims who constantly tramped from one holy place to another and from one starets to another, and were always entranced by every shrine and every starets. Father Sergius knew this common, cold, conventional, and most irreligious type. There were pilgrims, for the most part discharged soldiers, unaccustomed to a settled life, poverty-stricken, and many of them drunken old men, who tramped from monastery to monastery merely to be fed. And there were rough peasants and peasant-women who had come with their selfish requirements, seeking cures or to have doubts about quite practical affairs solved for them: about marrying off a daughter, or hiring a shop, or buying a bit of land, or how to atone for having overlaid a child or having an illegitimate one.

All this was an old story and not in the least interesting to him. He knew he would hear nothing new from these folk, that they would arouse no religious emotion in him; but he liked to see the crowd to which his blessing and advice was necessary and precious, so while that crowd oppressed him it also pleased him. Father Seraphim began to drive them away, saying that Father Sergius was tired.

But Father Sergius, remembering the words of the Gospel: "Forbid them" (children) "not to come unto me," and feeling tenderly towards himself at this recollection, said they should be allowed to approach.

He rose, went to the railing beyond which the crowd had gathered, and began blessing them and answering their questions, but in a voice so weak that he was touched with pity for himself. Yet despite his wish to receive them all he could not do it. Things again grew dark before his eyes, and he staggered and grasped the railings. He felt a rush of blood to his head and first went pale and then suddenly flushed.

"I must leave the rest till tomorrow. I cannot do more today," and, pronouncing a general benediction, he returned to the bench. The

merchant again supported him, and leading him by the arm helped him to be seated.

"Father!" came voices from the crowd. "Dear Father! Do not forsake us. Without you we are lost!"

The merchant, having seated Father Sergius on the bench under the elm, took on himself police duties and drove the people off very resolutely. It is true that he spoke in a low voice so that Father Sergius might not hear him, but his words were incisive and angry.

"Be off, be off! He has blessed you, and what more do you want? Get along with you, or I'll wring your necks! Move on there! Get along, you old woman with your dirty leg-bands! Go, go! Where are you shoving to? You've been told that it is finished. Tomorrow will be as God wills, but for today he has finished!"

"Father! Only let my eyes have a glimpse of his dear face!" said an old woman.

"I'll glimpse you! Where are you shoving to?"

Father Sergius noticed that the merchant seemed to be acting roughly, and in a feeble voice told the attendant that the people should not be driven away. He knew that they would be driven away all the same, and he much desired to be left alone and to rest, but he sent the attendant with that message to produce an impression.

"All right, all right! I am not driving them away. I am only remonstrating with them," replied the merchant. "You know they wouldn't hesitate to drive a man to death. They have no pity, they only consider themselves. … You've been told you cannot see him. Go away! Tomorrow!" And he got rid of them all.

He took all these pains because he liked order and liked to domineer and drive the people away, but chiefly because he wanted to have Father Sergius to himself. He was a widower with an only daughter who was an invalid and unmarried, and whom he had brought fourteen hundred versts to Father Sergius to be healed. For two years past he had been taking her to different places to be cured: first to the university clinic in the chief town of the province, but that did no good; then to a peasant in the province of Samara, where she got a little better; then to a doctor in Moscow to whom he paid much money, but this did no good at all. Now he had been told that Father Sergius wrought cures, and had brought her to him. So when all the people had been driven away he approached Father Sergius, and suddenly falling on his knees loudly exclaimed:

"Holy Father! Bless my afflicted offspring that she may be healed of her malady. I venture to prostrate myself at your holy feet."

And he placed one hand on the other, cup-wise. He said and did all this as if he were doing something clearly and firmly appointed by law and usage—as if one must and should ask for a daughter to be cured in just this way and no other. He did it with such conviction that it seemed even to Father Sergius that it should be said and done in just that way, but nevertheless he bade him rise and tell him what the trouble was. The merchant said that his daughter, a girl of twenty-two, had fallen ill two years ago, after her mother's sudden death. She had moaned (as he expressed it) and since then had not been herself. And now he had brought her fourteen hundred versts and she was waiting in the hostelry till Father Sergius should give orders to bring her. She did not go out during the day, being afraid of the light, and could only come after sunset.

"Is she very weak?" asked Father Sergius.

"No, she has no particular weakness. She is quite plump, and is only 'nerastenic' the doctors say. If you will only let me bring her this evening, Father Sergius, I'll fly like a spirit to fetch her. Holy Father! Revive a parent's heart, restore his line, save his afflicted daughter by your prayers!" And the merchant again threw himself on his knees and bending sideways, with his head resting on his clenched fists, remained stock still. Father Sergius again told him to get up, and thinking how heavy his activities were and how he went through with them patiently notwithstanding, he sighed heavily and after a few seconds of silence, said:

"Well, bring her this evening. I will pray for her, but now I am tired. …" and he closed his eyes. "I will send for you."

The merchant went away, stepping on tiptoe, which only made his boots creak the louder, and Father Sergius remained alone.

His whole life was filled by Church services and by people who came to see him, but today had been a particularly difficult one. In the morning an important official had arrived and had had a long conversation with him; after that a lady had come with her son. This son was a sceptical young professor whom the mother, an ardent believer and devoted to Father Sergius, had brought that he might talk to him. The conversation had been very trying. The young man, evidently not wishing to have a controversy with a monk, had agreed with him in everything as with someone who was mentally inferior. Father Sergius saw that the young man did not believe but yet was satisfied, tranquil, and at ease, and the memory of that conversation now disquieted him.

"Have something to eat, Father," said the attendant.

"All right, bring me something."

The attendant went to a hut that had been arranged some ten paces from the cave, and Father Sergius remained alone.

The time was long past when he had lived alone doing everything for himself and eating only rye-bread, or rolls prepared for the Church. He had been advised long since that he had no right to neglect his health, and he was given wholesome, though Lenten, food. He ate sparingly, though much more than he had done, and often he ate with much pleasure, and not as formerly with aversion and a sense of guilt. So it was now. He had some gruel, drank a cup of tea, and ate half a white roll.

The attendant went away, and Father Sergius remained alone under the elm tree.

It was a wonderful May evening, when the birches, aspens, elms, wild cherries, and oaks, had just burst into foliage.

The bush of wild cherries behind the elm tree was in full bloom and had not yet begun to shed its blossoms, and the nightingales—one quite near at hand and two or three others in the bushes down by the river—burst into full song after some preliminary twitters. From the river came the far-off songs of peasants returning, no doubt, from their work. The sun was setting behind the forest, its last rays glowing through the leaves. All that side was brilliant green, the other side with the elm tree was dark. The cockchafers flew clumsily about, falling to the ground when they collided with anything.

After supper Father Sergius began to repeat a silent prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us!" and then he read a psalm, and suddenly in the middle of the psalm a sparrow flew out from the bush, alighted on the ground, and hopped towards him chirping as it came, but then it took fright at something and flew away. He said a prayer which referred to his abandonment of the world, and hastened to finish it in order to send for the merchant with the sick daughter. She interested him in that she presented a distraction, and because both she and her father considered him a saint whose prayers were efficacious. Outwardly he disavowed that idea, but in the depths of his soul he considered it to be true.

He was often amazed that this had happened, that he, Stepán Kasátsky, had come to be such an extraordinary saint and even a worker of miracles, but of the fact that he was such there could not be the least doubt. He could not fail to believe in the miracles he himself witnessed, beginning with the sick boy and ending with the old woman who had recovered her sight when he had prayed for her.

Strange as it might be, it was so. Accordingly the merchant's daugh-

ter interested him as a new individual who had faith in him, and also as a fresh opportunity to confirm his healing powers and enhance his fame. "They bring people a thousand versts and write about it in the papers. The Emperor knows of it, and they know of it in Europe, in unbelieving Europe"—thought he. And suddenly he felt ashamed of his vanity and again began to pray. "Lord, King of Heaven, Comforter, Soul of Truth! Come and enter into me and cleanse me from all sin and save and bless my soul. Cleanse me from the sin of worldly vanity that troubles me!" he repeated, and he remembered how often he had prayed about this and how vain till now his prayers had been in that respect. His prayers worked miracles for others, but in his own case God had not granted him liberation from this petty passion.

He remembered his prayers at the commencement of his life at the hermitage, when he prayed for purity, humility, and love, and how it seemed to him then that God heard his prayers. He had retained his purity and had chopped off his finger. And he lifted the shrivelled stump of that finger to his lips and kissed it. It seemed to him now that he had been humble then when he had always seemed loathsome to himself on account of his sinfulness; and when he remembered the tender feelings with which he had then met an old man who was bringing a drunken soldier to him to ask alms; and how he had received *her*, it seemed to him that he had then possessed love also. But now? And he asked himself whether he loved anyone, whether he loved Sófya Ivánovna, or Father Seraphim, whether he had any feeling of love for all who had come to him that day—for that learned young man with whom he had had that instructive discussion in which he was concerned only to show off his own intelligence and that he had not lagged behind the times in knowledge. He wanted and needed their love, but felt none towards them. He now had neither love nor humility nor purity.

He was pleased to know that the merchant's daughter was twenty-two, and he wondered whether she was good-looking. When he inquired whether she was weak, he really wanted to know if she had feminine charm.

"Can I have fallen so low?" he thought. "Lord, help me! Restore me, my Lord and God!" And he clasped his hands and began to pray.

The nightingales burst into song, a cockchafer knocked against him and crept up the back of his neck. He brushed it off. "But does He exist? What if I am knocking at a door fastened from outside? The bar is on the door for all to see. Nature—the nightingales and the cockchafers—is that bar. Perhaps the young man was right." And he

began to pray aloud. He prayed for a long time till these thoughts vanished and he again felt calm and confident. He rang the bell and told the attendant to say that the merchant might bring his daughter to him now.

The merchant came, leading his daughter by the arm. He led her into the cell and immediately left her.

She was a very fair girl, plump and very short, with a pale, frightened, childish face and a much developed feminine figure. Father Sergius remained seated on the bench at the entrance and when she was passing and stopped beside him for his blessing he was aghast at himself for the way he looked at her figure. As she passed by him he was acutely conscious of her femininity, though he saw by her face that she was sensual and feebleminded. He rose and went into the cell. She was sitting on a stool waiting for him, and when he entered she rose.

"I want to go back to Papa," she said.

"Don't be afraid," he replied. "What are you suffering from?"

"I am in pain all over," she said, and suddenly her face lit up with a smile.

"You will be well," said he. "Pray!"

"What is the use of praying? I have prayed and it does no good"—and she continued to smile. "I want you to pray for me and lay your hands on me. I saw you in a dream."

"How did you see me?"

"I saw you put your hands on my breast like that." She took his hand and pressed it to her breast. "Just here."

He yielded his right hand to her.

"What is your name?" he asked, trembling all over and feeling that he was overcome and that his desire had already passed beyond control.

"Marie. Why?"

She took his hand and kissed it, and then put her arm round his waist and pressed him to herself.

"What are you doing?" he said. "Marie, you are a devil!"

"Oh, perhaps. What does it matter?"

And embracing him she sat down with him on the bed.

At dawn he went out into the porch.

"Can this all have happened? Her father will come and she will tell him everything. She is a devil! What am I to do? Here is the axe with which I chopped off my finger." He snatched up the axe and moved back towards the cell.

The attendant came up.

"Do you want some wood chopped? Let me have the axe."

Sergius yielded up the axe and entered the cell. She was lying there asleep. He looked at her with horror, and passed on beyond the partition, where he took down the peasant clothes and put them on. Then he seized a pair of scissors, cut off his long hair, and went out along the path down the hill to the river, where he had not been for more than three years.

A road ran beside the river and he went along it and walked till noon. Then he went into a field of rye and lay down there. Towards evening he approached a village, but without entering it went towards the cliff that overhung the river. There he again lay down to rest.

It was early morning, half an hour before sunrise. All was damp and gloomy and a cold early wind was blowing from the west. "Yes, I must end it all. There is no God. But how am I to end it? Throw myself into the river? I can swim and should not drown. Hang myself? Yes, just throw this sash over a branch." This seemed so feasible and so easy that he felt horrified. As usual at moments of despair he felt the need of prayer. But there was no one to pray to. There was no God. He lay down resting on his arm, and suddenly such a longing for sleep overcame him that he could no longer support his head on his hand, but stretched out his arm, laid his head upon it, and fell asleep. But that sleep lasted only for a moment. He woke up immediately and began not to dream but to remember.

He saw himself as a child in his mother's home in the country. A carriage drives up, and out of it steps Uncle Nicholas Sergeévich, with his long, spade-shaped, black beard, and with him Páshenka, a thin little girl with large mild eyes and a timid pathetic face. And into their company of boys Páshenka is brought and they have to play with her, but it is dull. She is silly, and it ends by their making fun of her and forcing her to show how she can swim. She lies down on the floor and shows them, and they all laugh and make a fool of her. She sees this and blushes red in patches and becomes more pitiable than before, so pitiable that he feels ashamed and can never forget that crooked, kindly, submissive smile. And Sergius remembered having seen her since then. Long after, just before he became a monk, she had married a landowner who squandered all her fortune and was in the habit of beating her. She had had two children, a son and a daughter, but the son had died while still young. And Sergius remembered having seen her very wretched. Then again he had seen her in the monastery when she was a widow. She had been still the same, not exactly stupid, but insipid, insignificant, and pitiable. She had come with her daughter

and her daughter's fiancé. They were already poor at that time and later on he had heard that she was living in a small provincial town and was very poor.

"Why am I thinking about her?" he asked himself, but he could not cease doing so. "Where is she? How is she getting on? Is she still as unhappy as she was then when she had to show us how to swim on the floor? But why should I think about her? What am I doing? I must put an end to myself."

And again he felt afraid, and again, to escape from that thought, he went on thinking about Páshenka.

So he lay for a long time, thinking now of his unavoidable end and now of Páshenka. She presented herself to him as a means of salvation. At last he fell asleep, and in his sleep he saw an angel who came to him and said: "Go to Páshenka and learn from her what you have to do, what your sin is, and wherein lies your salvation."

He awoke, and having decided that this was a vision sent by God, he felt glad, and resolved to do what had been told him in the vision. He knew the town where she lived. It was some three hundred versts[30] away, and he set out to walk there.

VI

Páshenka had already long ceased to be Páshenka and had become old, withered, wrinkled Praskóvya Mikháylovna,[31] mother-in-law of that failure, the drunken official Mavríkyev. She was living in the country town where he had had his last appointment, and there she was supporting the family: her daughter, her ailing neurasthenic son-in-law, and her five grandchildren. She did this by giving music lessons to tradesmen's daughters, giving four and sometimes five lessons a day of an hour each, and earning in this way some sixty rubles[32] a month. So they lived for the present, in expectation of another appointment. She had sent letters to all her relations and acquaintances asking them to obtain a post for her son-in-law, and among the rest she had written to Sergius, but that letter had not reached him.

It was a Saturday, and Praskóvya Mikháylovna was herself mixing

[30] Two hundred miles.

[31] Páshenka is a familiar pet name. Praskóvya Mikháylovna (Michael's daughter) is the full Christian name and patronymic proper when formally addressing an adult. —*A. M.*

[32] £6.

dough for currant bread such as the serf-cook on her father's estate used to make so well. She wished to give her grandchildren a treat on the Sunday.

Másha, her daughter, was nursing her youngest child, the eldest boy and girl were at school, and her son-in-law was asleep, not having slept during the night. Praskóvya Mikháylovna had remained awake too for a great part of the night, trying to soften her daughter's anger against her husband.

She saw that it was impossible for her son-in-law, a weak creature, to be other than he was, and realized that his wife's reproaches could do no good—so she used all her efforts to soften those reproaches and to avoid recrimination and anger. Unkindly relations between people caused her actual physical suffering. It was so clear to her that bitter feelings do not make anything better, but only make everything worse. She did not in fact think about this: she simply suffered at the sight of anger as she would from a bad smell, a harsh noise, or from blows on her body.

She had—with a feeling of self-satisfaction—just taught Lukérya how to mix the dough, when her six-year-old grandson Mísha, wearing an apron and with darned stockings on his crooked little legs, ran into the kitchen with a frightened face.

"Grandma, a dreadful old man wants to see you."

Lukérya looked out at the door.

"There is a pilgrim of some kind, a man …"

Praskóvya Mikháylovna rubbed her thin elbows against one another, wiped her hands on her apron and went upstairs to get a five-kopeck piece[33] out of her purse for him, but remembering that she had nothing less than a ten-kopeck piece she decided to give him some bread instead. She returned to the cupboard, but suddenly blushed at the thought of having grudged the ten-kopeck piece, and telling Lukérya to cut a slice of bread, went upstairs again to fetch it. "It serves you right," she said to herself. "You must now give twice over."

She gave both the bread and the money to the pilgrim, and when doing so—far from being proud of her generosity—she excused herself for giving so little. The man had such an imposing appearance.

Though he had tramped two hundred versts as a beggar, though he was tattered and had grown thin and weatherbeaten, though he had cropped his long hair and was wearing a peasant's cap and boots, and though he bowed very humbly, Sergius still had the impressive

[33] About a penny.

appearance that made him so attractive. But Praskóvya Mikháylovna did not recognize him. She could hardly do so, not having seen him for almost twenty years.

"Don't think ill of me, Father. Perhaps you want something to eat?"

He took the bread and the money, and Praskóvya Mikháylovna was surprised that he did not go, but stood looking at her.

"Páshenka, I have come to you! Take me in …"

His beautiful black eyes, shining with the tears that started in them, were fixed on her with imploring insistence. And under his greyish moustache his lips quivered piteously.

Praskóvya Mikháylovna pressed her hands to her withered breast, opened her mouth, and stood petrified, staring at the pilgrim with dilated eyes.

"It can't be! Stëpa! Sergéy! Father Sergius!"

"Yes, it is I," said Sergius in a low voice. "Only not Sergius, or Father Sergius, but a great sinner, Stepán Kasátsky—a great and lost sinner. Take me in and help me!"

"It's impossible! How have you so humbled yourself? But come in."

She reached out her hand, but he did not take it and only followed her in.

But where was she to take him? The lodging was a small one. Formerly she had had a tiny room, almost a closet, for herself, but later she had given it up to her daughter, and Másha was now sitting there rocking the baby.

"Sit here for the present," she said to Sergius, pointing to a bench in the kitchen.

He sat down at once, and with an evidently accustomed movement slipped the straps of his wallet first off one shoulder and then off the other.

"My God, my God! How you have humbled yourself, Father! Such great fame, and now like this …"

Sergius did not reply, but only smiled meekly, placing his wallet under the bench on which he sat.

"Másha, do you know who this is?"—And in a whisper Praskóvya Mikháylovna told her daughter who he was, and together they then carried the bed and the cradle out of the tiny room and cleared it for Sergius.

Praskóvya Mikháylovna led him into it.

"Here you can rest. Don't take offence … but I must go out."

"Where to?"

"I have to go to a lesson. I am ashamed to tell you, but I teach music!"

"Music? But that is good. Only just one thing, Praskóvya Mikháylovna, I have come to you with a definite object. When can I have a talk with you?"

"I shall be very glad. Will this evening do?"

"Yes. But one thing more. Don't speak about me, or say who I am. I have revealed myself only to you. No one knows where I have gone to. It must be so."

"Oh, but I have told my daughter."

"Well, ask her not to mention it."

And Sergius took off his boots, lay down, and at once fell asleep after a sleepless night and a walk of nearly thirty miles.

When Praskóvya Mikháylovna returned, Sergius was sitting in the little room waiting for her. He did not come out for dinner, but had some soup and gruel which Lukérya brought him.

"How is it that you have come back earlier than you said?" asked Sergius. "Can I speak to you now?"

"How is it that I have the happiness to receive such a guest? I have missed one of my lessons. That can wait … I had always been planning to go to see you. I wrote to you, and now this good fortune has come."

"Páshenka, please listen to what I am going to tell you as to a confession made to God at my last hour. Páshenka, I am not a holy man, I am not even as good as a simple ordinary man; I am a loathsome, vile, and proud sinner who has gone astray, and who, if not worse than everyone else, is at least worse than most very bad people."

Páshenka looked at him at first with staring eyes. But she believed what he said, and when she had quite grasped it she touched his hand, smiling pityingly, and said:

"Perhaps you exaggerate, Stíva?"

"No, Páshenka. I am an adulterer, a murderer, a blasphemer, and a deceiver."

"My God! How is that?" exclaimed Praskóvya Mikháylovna.

"But I must go on living. And I, who thought I knew everything, who taught others how to live—I know nothing and ask you to teach me."

"What are you saying, Stíva? You are laughing at me. Why do you always make fun of me?"

"Well, if you think I am jesting you must have it as you please. But tell me all the same how you live, and how you have lived your life."

"I? I have lived a very nasty, horrible life, and now God is punishing

me as I deserve. I live so wretchedly, so wretchedly …"

"How was it with your marriage? How did you live with your husband?"

"It was all bad. I married because I fell in love in the nastiest way. Papa did not approve. But I would not listen to anything and just got married. Then instead of helping my husband I tormented him by my jealousy, which I could not restrain."

"I heard that he drank …"

"Yes, but I did not give him any peace. I always reproached him, though you know it is a disease! He could not refrain from it. I now remember how I tried to prevent his having it, and the frightful scenes we had!"

And she looked at Kasátsky with beautiful eyes, suffering from the remembrance.

Kasátsky remembered how he had been told that Páshenka's husband used to beat her, and now, looking at her thin withered neck with prominent veins behind her ears, and her scanty coil of hair, half grey half auburn, he seemed to see just how it had occurred.

"Then I was left with two children and no means at all."

"But you had an estate!"

"Oh, we sold that while Vásya was still alive, and the money was all spent. We had to live, and like all our young ladies I did not know how to earn anything. I was particularly useless and helpless. So we spent all we had. I taught the children and improved my own education a little. And then Mítya fell ill when he was already in the fourth form, and God took him. Másha fell in love with Ványa, my son-in-law. And—well, he is well-meaning but unfortunate. He is ill."

"Mamma!"—her daughter's voice interrupted her—"Take Mítya! I can't be in two places at once."

Praskóvya Mikháylovna shuddered, but rose and went out of the room, stepping quickly in her patched shoes. She soon came back with a boy of two in her arms, who threw himself backwards and grabbed at her shawl with his little hands.

"Where was I? Oh yes, he had a good appointment here, and his chief was a kind man too. But Ványa could not go on, and had to give up his position."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Neurasthenia—it is a dreadful complaint. We consulted a doctor, who told us he ought to go away, but we had no means. … I always hope it will pass of itself. He has no particular pain, but …"

"Lukérya!" cried an angry and feeble voice. "She is always sent

away when I want her. Mamma …"

"I'm coming!" Praskóvya Mikháylovna again interrupted herself. "He has not had his dinner yet. He can't eat with us."

She went out and arranged something, and came back wiping her thin dark hands.

"So that is how I live. I always complain and am always dissatisfied, but thank God the grandchildren are all nice and healthy, and we can still live. But why talk about me?"

"But what do you live on?"

"Well, I earn a little. How I used to dislike music, but how useful it is to me now!" Her small hand lay on the chest of drawers beside which she was sitting, and she drummed an exercise with her thin fingers.

"How much do you get for a lesson?"

"Sometimes a ruble, sometimes fifty kopecks, or sometimes thirty.[34] They are all so kind to me."

"And do your pupils get on well?" asked Kasátsky with a slight smile.

Praskóvya Mikháylovna did not at first believe that he was asking seriously, and looked inquiringly into his eyes.

"Some of them do. One of them is a splendid girl—the butcher's daughter—such a good kind girl! If I were a clever woman I ought, of course, with the connections Papa had, to be able to get an appointment for my son-in-law. But as it is I have not been able to do anything, and have brought them all to this—as you see."

"Yes, yes," said Kasátsky, lowering his head. "And how is it, Páshenka—do you take part in Church life?"

"Oh, don't speak of it. I am so bad that way, and have neglected it so! I keep the fasts with the children and sometimes go to church, and then again sometimes I don't go for months. I only send the children."

"But why don't you go yourself?"

"To tell the truth" (she blushed) "I am ashamed, for my daughter's sake and the children's, to go there in tattered clothes, and I haven't anything else. Besides, I am just lazy."

"And do you pray at home?"

"I do. But what sort of prayer is it? Only mechanical. I know it should not be like that, but I lack real religious feeling. The only thing is that I know how bad I am …"

"Yes, yes, that's right!" said Kasátsky, as if approvingly.

"I'm coming! I'm coming!" she replied to a call from her son-in-law,

[34] "Sometimes two shillings, sometimes one, or sometimes sevenpence."

and tidying her scanty plait she left the room.

But this time it was long before she returned. When she came back, Kasátsky was sitting in the same position, his elbows resting on his knees and his head bowed. But his wallet was strapped on his back.

When she came in, carrying a small tin lamp without a shade, he raised his fine weary eyes and sighed very deeply.

"I did not tell them who you are," she began timidly. "I only said that you are a pilgrim, a nobleman, and that I used to know you. Come into the dining-room for tea."

"No …"

"Well then, I'll bring some to you here."

"No, I don't want anything. God bless you, Páshenka! I am going now. If you pity me, don't tell anyone that you have seen me. For the love of God don't tell anyone. Thank you. I would bow to your feet but I know it would make you feel awkward. Thank you, and forgive me for Christ's sake!"

"Give me your blessing."

"God bless you! Forgive me for Christ's sake!"

He rose, but she would not let him go until she had given him bread and butter and rusks. He took it all and went away.

It was dark, and before he had passed the second house he was lost to sight. She only knew he was there because the dog at the priest's house was barking.

"So that is what my dream meant! Páshenka is what I ought to have been but failed to be. I lived for men on the pretext of living for God, while she lived for God imagining that she lives for men. Yes, one good deed—a cup of water given without thought of reward—is worth more than any benefit I imagined I was bestowing on people. But after all was there not some share of sincere desire to serve God?" he asked himself, and the answer was: "Yes, there was, but it was all soiled and overgrown by desire for human praise. Yes, there is no God for the man who lives, as I did, for human praise. I will now seek Him!"

And he walked from village to village as he had done on his way to Páshenka, meeting and parting from other pilgrims, men and women, and asking for bread and a night's rest in Christ's name. Occasionally some angry housewife scolded him, or a drunken peasant reviled him, but for the most part he was given food and drink and even something to take with him. His noble bearing disposed some people in his favour, while others on the contrary seemed pleased at the sight of a gentleman who had come to beggary.

But his gentleness prevailed with everyone.

Often, finding a copy of the Gospels in a hut he would read it aloud, and when they heard him the people were always touched and surprised, as at something new yet familiar.

When he succeeded in helping people, either by advice, or by his knowledge of reading and writing, or by settling some quarrel, he did not wait to see their gratitude but went away directly afterwards. And little by little God began to reveal Himself within him.

Once he was walking along with two old women and a soldier. They were stopped by a party consisting of a lady and gentleman in a gig and another lady and gentleman on horseback. The husband was on horseback with his daughter, while in the gig his wife was driving with a Frenchman, evidently a traveller.

The party stopped to let the Frenchman see the pilgrims who, in accord with a popular Russian superstition, tramped about from place to place instead of working.

They spoke French, thinking that the others would not understand them.

"*Demandez-leur*," said the Frenchman, "*s'ils sont bien sur de ce que leur pèlerinage est agréable à Dieu.*"[35]

The question was asked, and one old woman replied:

"As God takes it. Our feet have reached the holy places, but our hearts may not have done so."

They asked the soldier. He said that he was alone in the world and had nowhere else to go.

They asked Kasátsky who he was.

"A servant of God."

"*Qu'est-ce qu'il dit? Il ne répond pas.*"[36]

"*Il dit qu'il est un serviteur de Dieu. Cela doit être un fils de prêtre. Il a de la race. Avez-vous de la petite monnaie?*"[37]

The Frenchman found some small change and gave twenty kopecks to each of the pilgrims.

"*Mais dites-leur que ce n'est pas pour les cierges que je leur donne, mais pour qu'ils se régalent de thé. Chay, chay pour vous, mon vieux!*"[38] he said with a smile. And he patted Kasátsky on the shoulder with his gloved hand.

[35] "Ask them whether they are quite sure that their pilgrimage pleases God."

[36] "What does he say? He does not answer."

[37] "He says that he is a servant of God. That one is probably a priest's son. He is not a common man. Have you any small change?"

[38] "But tell them that I give it them not to spend on church candles, but that they should have some tea. Tea, tea for you, old fellow."

"May Christ bless you," replied Kasátsky without replacing his cap and bowing his bald head.

He rejoiced particularly at this meeting, because he had disregarded the opinion of men and had done the simplest, easiest thing—humbly accepted twenty kopecks and given them to his comrade, a blind beggar. The less importance he attached to the opinion of men the more did he feel the presence of God within him.

For eight months Kasátsky tramped on in this manner, and in the ninth month he was arrested for not having a passport. This happened at a night-refuge in a provincial town where he had passed the night with some pilgrims. He was taken to the police-station, and when asked who he was and where was his passport, he replied that he had no passport and that he was a servant of God. He was classed as a tramp, sentenced, and sent to live in Siberia.

In Siberia he has settled down as the hired man of a well-to-do peasant, in which capacity he works in the kitchen-garden, teaches children, and attends to the sick.

Master and Man

I

It happened in the 'seventies in winter, on the day after St. Nicholas's Day. There was a fête in the parish and the innkeeper, Vasíli Andréevich Brekhunóv, a Second Guild merchant, being a church elder had to go to church, and had also to entertain his relatives and friends at home.

But when the last of them had gone he at once began to prepare to drive over to see a neighbouring proprietor about a grove which he had been bargaining over for a long time. He was now in a hurry to start, lest buyers from the town might forestall him in making a profitable purchase.

The youthful landowner was asking ten thousand rubles for the grove simply because Vasíli Andréevich was offering seven thousand. Seven thousand was, however, only a third of its real value. Vasíli Andréevich might perhaps have got it down to his own price, for the woods were in his district and he had a long-standing agreement with the other village dealers that no one should run up the price in another's district, but he had now learnt that some timber-dealers from

town meant to bid for the Goryáchkin grove, and he resolved to go at once and get the matter settled. So as soon as the feast was over, he took seven hundred rubles from his strong box, added to them two thousand three hundred rubles of church money he had in his keeping, so as to make up the sum to three thousand; carefully counted the notes, and having put them into his pocketbook made haste to start.

Nikíta, the only one of Vasíli Andréevich's labourers who was not drunk that day, ran to harness the horse. Nikíta, though an habitual drunkard, was not drunk that day because since the last day before the fast, when he had drunk his coat and leather boots, he had sworn off drink and had kept his vow for two months, and was still keeping it despite the temptation of the vodka that had been drunk everywhere during the first two days of the feast.

Nikíta was a peasant of about fifty from a neighbouring village, "not a manager" as the peasants said of him, meaning that he was not the thrifty head of a household but lived most of his time away from home as a labourer. He was valued everywhere for his industry, dexterity, and strength at work, and still more for his kindly and pleasant temper. But he never settled down anywhere for long because about twice a year, or even oftener, he had a drinking bout, and then besides spending all his clothes on drink he became turbulent and quarrelsome. Vasíli Andréevich himself had turned him away several times, but had afterwards taken him back again—valuing his honesty, his kindness to animals, and especially his cheapness. Vasíli Andréevich did not pay Nikíta the eighty rubles a year such a man was worth, but only about forty, which he gave him haphazard, in small sums, and even that mostly not in cash but in goods from his own shop and at high prices.

Nikíta's wife Martha, who had once been a handsome vigorous woman, managed the homestead with the help of her son and two daughters, and did not urge Nikíta to live at home: first because she had been living for some twenty years already with a cooper, a peasant from another village who lodged in their house; and secondly because though she managed her husband as she pleased when he was sober, she feared him like fire when he was drunk. Once when he had got drunk at home, Nikíta, probably to make up for his submissiveness when sober, broke open her box, took out her best clothes, snatched up an axe, and chopped all her undergarments and dresses to bits. All the wages Nikíta earned went to his wife, and he raised no objection to that. So now, two days before the holiday, Martha had been twice to see Vasíli Andréevich and had got from him wheat flour, tea, sugar,

and a quart of vodka, the lot costing three rubles, and also five rubles in cash, for which she thanked him as for a special favour, though he owed Nikíta at least twenty rubles.

"What agreement did we ever draw up with you?" said Vasíli Andréevich to Nikíta. "If you need anything, take it; you will work it off. I'm not like others to keep you waiting, and making up accounts and reckoning fines. We deal straightforwardly. You serve me and I don't neglect you."

And when saying this Vasíli Andréevich was honestly convinced that he was Nikíta's benefactor, and he knew how to put it so plausibly that all those who depended on him for their money, beginning with Nikíta, confirmed him in the conviction that he was their benefactor and did not overreach them.

"Yes, I understand, Vasíli Andréevich. You know that I serve you and take as much pains as I would for my own father. I understand very well!" Nikíta would reply. He was quite aware that Vasíli Andréevich was cheating him, but at the same time he felt that it was useless to try to clear up his accounts with him or explain his side of the matter, and that as long as he had nowhere to go he must accept what he could get.

Now, having heard his master's order to harness, he went as usual cheerfully and willingly to the shed, stepping briskly and easily on his rather turned-in feet; took down from a nail the heavy tasselled leather bridle, and jingling the rings of the bit went to the closed stable where the horse he was to harness was standing by himself.

"What, feeling lonely, feeling lonely, little silly?" said Nikíta in answer to the low whinny with which he was greeted by the good-tempered, medium-sized bay stallion, with a rather slanting crupper, who stood alone in the shed. "Now then, now then, there's time enough. Let me water you first," he went on, speaking to the horse just as to someone who understood the words he was using, and having whisked the dusty, grooved back of the well-fed young stallion with the skirt of his coat, he put a bridle on his handsome head, straightened his ears and forelock, and having taken off his halter led him out to water.

Picking his way out of the dung-strewn stable, Mukhórty frisked, and making play with his hind leg pretended that he meant to kick Nikíta, who was running at a trot beside him to the pump.

"Now then, now then, you rascal!" Nikíta called out, well knowing how carefully Mukhórty threw out his hind leg just to touch his greasy sheepskin coat but not to strike him—a trick Nikíta much appreciated.

After a drink of the cold water the horse sighed, moving his strong

wet lips, from the hairs of which transparent drops fell into the trough; then standing still as if in thought, he suddenly gave a loud snort.

"If you don't want any more, you needn't. But don't go asking for any later," said Nikíta quite seriously and fully explaining his conduct to Mukhórty. Then he ran back to the shed pulling the playful young horse, who wanted to gambol all over the yard, by the rein.

There was no one else in the yard except a stranger, the cook's husband, who had come for the holiday.

"Go and ask which sledge is to be harnessed—the wide one or the small one—there's a good fellow!"

The cook's husband went into the house, which stood on an iron foundation and was iron-roofed, and soon returned saying that the little one was to be harnessed. By that time Nikíta had put the collar and brass-studded bellyband on Mukhórty and, carrying a light, painted shaft-bow in one hand, was leading the horse with the other up to two sledges that stood in the shed.

"All right, let it be the little one!" he said, backing the intelligent horse, which all the time kept pretending to bite him, into the shafts, and with the aid of the cook's husband he proceeded to harness. When everything was nearly ready and only the reins had to be adjusted, Nikíta sent the other man to the shed for some straw and to the barn for a drugget.

"There, that's all right! Now, now, don't bristle up!" said Nikíta, pressing down into the sledge the freshly threshed oat straw the cook's husband had brought. "And now let's spread the sacking like this, and the drugget over it. There, like that it will be comfortable sitting," he went on, suiting the action to the words and tucking the drugget all round over the straw to make a seat.

"Thank you, dear man. Things always go quicker with two working at it!" he added. And gathering up the leather reins fastened together by a brass ring, Nikíta took the driver's seat and started the impatient horse over the frozen manure which lay in the yard, towards the gate.

"Uncle Nikíta! I say, Uncle, Uncle!" a high-pitched voice shouted, and a seven-year-old boy in a black sheepskin coat, new white felt boots, and a warm cap, ran hurriedly out of the house into the yard. "Take me with you!" he cried, fastening up his coat as he ran.

"All right, come along, darling!" said Nikíta, and stopping the sledge he picked up the master's pale thin little son, radiant with joy, and drove out into the road.

It was past two o'clock and the day was windy, dull, and cold, with more than twenty degrees Fahrenheit of frost. Half the sky was hidden

by a lowering dark cloud. In the yard it was quiet, but in the street the wind was felt more keenly. The snow swept down from a neighbouring shed and whirled about in the corner near the bathhouse.

Hardly had Nikíta driven out of the yard and turned the horse's head to the house, before Vasíli Andréevich emerged from the high porch in front of the house with a cigarette in his mouth and wearing a cloth-covered sheepskin coat tightly girdled low at his waist, and stepped onto the hard-trodden snow which squeaked under the leather soles of his felt boots, and stopped. Taking a last whiff of his cigarette he threw it down, stepped on it, and letting the smoke escape through his moustache and looking askance at the horse that was coming up, began to tuck in his sheepskin collar on both sides of his ruddy face, clean-shaven except for the moustache, so that his breath should not moisten the collar.

"See now! The young scamp is there already!" he exclaimed when he saw his little son in the sledge. Vasíli Andréevich was excited by the vodka he had drunk with his visitors, and so he was even more pleased than usual with everything that was his and all that he did. The sight of his son, whom he always thought of as his heir, now gave him great satisfaction. He looked at him, screwing up his eyes and showing his long teeth.

His wife—pregnant, thin and pale, with her head and shoulders wrapped in a shawl so that nothing of her face could be seen but her eyes—stood behind him in the vestibule to see him off.

"Now really, you ought to take Nikíta with you," she said timidly, stepping out from the doorway.

Vasíli Andréevich did not answer. Her words evidently annoyed him and he frowned angrily and spat.

"You have money on you," she continued in the same plaintive voice. "What if the weather gets worse! Do take him, for goodness' sake!"

"Why? Don't I know the road that I must needs take a guide?" exclaimed Vasíli Andréevich, uttering every word very distinctly and compressing his lips unnaturally, as he usually did when speaking to buyers and sellers.

"Really you ought to take him. I beg you in God's name!" his wife repeated, wrapping her shawl more closely round her head.

"There, she sticks to it like a leech! … Where am I to take him?"

"I'm quite ready to go with you, Vasíli Andréevich," said Nikíta cheerfully. "But they must feed the horses while I am away," he added, turning to his master's wife.

"I'll look after them, Nikíta dear. I'll tell Simon," replied the mis-

tress.

"Well, Vasíli Andréevich, am I to come with you?" said Nikíta, awaiting a decision.

"It seems I must humour my old woman. But if you're coming you'd better put on a warmer cloak," said Vasíli Andréevich, smiling again as he winked at Nikíta's short sheepskin coat, which was torn under the arms and at the back, was greasy and out of shape, frayed to a fringe round the skirt, and had endured many things in its lifetime.

"Hey, dear man, come and hold the horse!" shouted Nikíta to the cook's husband, who was still in the yard.

"No, I will myself, I will myself!" shrieked the little boy, pulling his hands, red with cold, out of his pockets, and seizing the cold leather reins.

"Only don't be too long dressing yourself up. Look alive!" shouted Vasíli Andréevich, grinning at Nikíta.

"Only a moment, Father, Vasíli Andréevich!" replied Nikíta, and running quickly with his in-turned toes in his felt boots with their soles patched with felt, he hurried across the yard and into the workmen's hut.

"Arínushka! Get my coat down from the stove. I'm going with the master," he said, as he ran into the hut and took down his girdle from the nail on which it hung.

The workmen's cook, who had had a sleep after dinner and was now getting the samovar ready for her husband, turned cheerfully to Nikíta, and infected by his hurry began to move as quickly as he did, got down his miserable worn-out cloth coat from the stove where it was drying, and began hurriedly shaking it out and smoothing it down.

"There now, you'll have a chance of a holiday with your good man," said Nikíta, who from kindhearted politeness always said something to anyone he was alone with.

Then, drawing his worn narrow girdle round him, he drew in his breath, pulling in his lean stomach still more, and girdled himself as tightly as he could over his sheepskin.

"There now," he said addressing himself no longer to the cook but the girdle, as he tucked the ends in at the waist, "now you won't come undone!" And working his shoulders up and down to free his arms, he put the coat over his sheepskin, arched his back more strongly to ease his arms, poked himself under the armpits, and took down his leather-covered mittens from the shelf. "Now we're all right!"

"You ought to wrap your feet up, Nikíta. Your boots are very bad."

Nikíta stopped as if he had suddenly realized this.

"Yes, I ought to. … But they'll do like this. It isn't far!" and he ran out into the yard.

"Won't you be cold, Nikíta?" said the mistress as he came up to the sledge.

"Cold? No, I'm quite warm," answered Nikíta as he pushed some straw up to the forepart of the sledge so that it should cover his feet, and stowed away the whip, which the good horse would not need, at the bottom of the sledge.

Vasíli Andréevich, who was wearing two fur-lined coats one over the other, was already in the sledge, his broad back filling nearly its whole rounded width, and taking the reins he immediately touched the horse. Nikíta jumped in just as the sledge started, and seated himself in front on the left side, with one leg hanging over the edge.

II

The good stallion took the sledge along at a brisk pace over the smooth-frozen road through the village, the runners squeaking slightly as they went.

"Look at him hanging on there! Hand me the whip, Nikíta!" shouted Vasíli Andréevich, evidently enjoying the sight of his "heir," who standing on the runners was hanging on at the back of the sledge. "I'll give it you! Be off to mamma, you dog!"

The boy jumped down. The horse increased his amble and, suddenly changing foot, broke into a fast trot.

The Crosses, the village where Vasíli Andréevich lived, consisted of six houses. As soon as they had passed the blacksmith's hut, the last in the village, they realized that the wind was much stronger than they had thought. The road could hardly be seen. The tracks left by the sledge-runners were immediately covered by snow and the road was only distinguished by the fact that it was higher than the rest of the ground. There was a swirl of snow over the fields and the line where sky and earth met could not be seen. The Telyátin forest, usually clearly visible, now only loomed up occasionally and dimly through the driving snowy dust. The wind came from the left, insistently blowing over to one side the mane on Mukhórty's sleek neck and carrying aside even his fluffy tail, which was tied in a simple knot. Nikíta's wide coat-collar, as he sat on the windy side, pressed close to his cheek and nose.

"This road doesn't give him a chance—it's too snowy," said Vasíli Andréevich, who prided himself on his good horse. "I once drove to

Pashútino with him in half an hour."

"What?" asked Nikíta, who could not hear on account of his collar.

"I say I once went to Pashútino in half an hour," shouted Vasíli Andréevich.

"It goes without saying that he's a good horse," replied Nikíta.

They were silent for a while. But Vasíli Andréevich wished to talk.

"Well, did you tell your wife not to give the cooper any vodka?" he began in the same loud tone, quite convinced that Nikíta must feel flattered to be talking with so clever and important a person as himself, and he was so pleased with his jest that it did not enter his head that the remark might be unpleasant to Nikíta.

The wind again prevented Nikíta's hearing his master's words.

Vasíli Andréevich repeated the jest about the cooper in his loud, clear voice.

"That's their business, Vasíli Andréevich. I don't pry into their affairs. As long as she doesn't ill-treat our boy—God be with them."

"That's so," said Vasíli Andréevich. "Well, and will you be buying a horse in spring?" he went on, changing the subject.

"Yes, I can't avoid it," answered Nikíta, turning down his collar and leaning back towards his master.

The conversation now became interesting to him and he did not wish to lose a word.

"The lad's growing up. He must begin to plough for himself, but till now we've always had to hire someone," he said.

"Well, why not have the lean-cruppered one. I won't charge much for it," shouted Vasíli Andréevich, feeling animated, and consequently starting on his favourite occupation—that of horse-dealing—which absorbed all his mental powers.

"Or you might let me have fifteen rubles and I'll buy one at the horse-market," said Nikíta, who knew that the horse Vasíli Andréevich wanted to sell him would be dear at seven rubles, but that if he took it from him it would be charged at twenty-five, and then he would be unable to draw any money for half a year.

"It's a good horse. I think of your interest as of my own—according to conscience. Brekhunóv isn't a man to wrong anyone. Let the loss be mine. I'm not like others. Honestly!" he shouted in the voice in which he hypnotized his customers and dealers. "It's a real good horse."

"Quite so!" said Nikíta with a sigh, and convinced that there was nothing more to listen to, he again released his collar, which immediately covered his ear and face.

They drove on in silence for about half an hour. The wind blew

sharply onto Nikíta's side and arm where his sheepskin was torn.

He huddled up and breathed into the collar which covered his mouth, and was not wholly cold.

"What do you think—shall we go through Karamýshevo or by the straight road?" asked Vasíli Andréevich.

The road through Karamýshevo was more frequented and was well marked with a double row of high stakes. The straight road was nearer but little used and had no stakes, or only poor ones covered with snow.

Nikíta thought awhile.

"Though Karamýshevo is farther, it is better going," he said.

"But by the straight road, when once we get through the hollow by the forest, it's good going—sheltered," said Vasíli Andréevich, who wished to go the nearest way.

"Just as you please," said Nikíta, and again let go of his collar.

Vasíli Andréevich did as he had said, and having gone about half a verst came to a tall oak stake which had a few dry leaves still dangling on it, and there he turned to the left.

On turning they faced directly against the wind, and snow was beginning to fall. Vasíli Andréevich, who was driving, inflated his cheeks, blowing the breath out through his moustache. Nikíta dozed.

So they went on in silence for about ten minutes. Suddenly Vasíli Andréevich began saying something.

"Eh, what?" asked Nikíta, opening his eyes.

Vasíli Andréevich did not answer, but bent over, looking behind them and then ahead of the horse. The sweat had curled Mukhórty's coat between his legs and on his neck. He went at a walk.

"What is it?" Nikíta asked again.

"What is it? What is it?" Vasíli Andréevich mimicked him angrily. "There are no stakes to be seen! We must have got off the road!"

"Well, pull up then, and I'll look for it," said Nikíta, and jumping down lightly from the sledge and taking the whip from under the straw, he went off to the left from his own side of the sledge.

The snow was not deep that year, so that it was possible to walk anywhere, but still in places it was knee-deep and got into Nikíta's boots. He went about feeling the ground with his feet and the whip, but could not find the road anywhere.

"Well, how is it?" asked Vasíli Andréevich when Nikíta came back to the sledge.

"There is no road this side. I must go to the other side and try there," said Nikíta.

"There's something there in front. Go and have a look."

Nikíta went to what had appeared dark, but found that it was earth which the wind had blown from the bare fields of winter oats and had strewn over the snow, colouring it. Having searched to the right also, he returned to the sledge, brushed the snow from his coat, shook it out of his boots, and seated himself once more.

"We must go to the right," he said decidedly. "The wind was blowing on our left before, but now it is straight in my face. Drive to the right," he repeated with decision.

Vasíli Andréevich took his advice and turned to the right, but still there was no road. They went on in that direction for some time. The wind was as fierce as ever and it was snowing lightly.

"It seems, Vasíli Andréevich, that we have gone quite astray," Nikíta suddenly remarked, as if it were a pleasant thing. "What is that?" he added, pointing to some potato vines that showed up from under the snow.

Vasíli Andréevich stopped the perspiring horse, whose deep sides were heaving heavily.

"What is it?"

"Why, we are on the Zakhárov lands. See where we've got to!"

"Nonsense!" retorted Vasíli Andréevich.

"It's not nonsense, Vasíli Andréevich. It's the truth," replied Nikíta. "You can feel that the sledge is going over a potato-field, and there are the heaps of vines which have been carted here. It's the Zakhárov factory land."

"Dear me, how we have gone astray!" said Vasíli Andréevich. "What are we to do now?"

"We must go straight on, that's all. We shall come out somewhere—if not at Zakhárova, then at the proprietor's farm," said Nikíta.

Vasíli Andréevich agreed, and drove as Nikíta had indicated. So they went on for a considerable time. At times they came onto bare fields and the sledge-runners rattled over frozen lumps of earth. Sometimes they got onto a winter-rye field, or a fallow field on which they could see stalks of wormwood, and straws sticking up through the snow and swaying in the wind; sometimes they came onto deep and even white snow, above which nothing was to be seen.

The snow was falling from above and sometimes rose from below. The horse was evidently exhausted, his hair had all curled up from sweat and was covered with hoarfrost, and he went at a walk. Suddenly he stumbled and sat down in a ditch or watercourse. Vasíli Andréevich wanted to stop, but Nikíta cried to him:

"Why stop? We've got in and must get out. Hey, pet! Hey, darling!

Gee up, old fellow!" he shouted in a cheerful tone to the horse, jumping out of the sledge and himself getting stuck in the ditch.

The horse gave a start and quickly climbed out onto the frozen bank. It was evidently a ditch that had been dug there.

"Where are we now?" asked Vasíli Andréevich.

"We'll soon find out!" Nikíta replied. "Go on, we'll get somewhere."

"Why, this must be the Goryáchkin forest!" said Vasíli Andréevich, pointing to something dark that appeared amid the snow in front of them.

"We'll see what forest it is when we get there," said Nikíta.

He saw that beside the black thing they had noticed, dry, oblong willow-leaves were fluttering, and so he knew it was not a forest but a settlement, but he did not wish to say so. And in fact they had not gone twenty-five yards beyond the ditch before something in front of them, evidently trees, showed up black, and they heard a new and melancholy sound. Nikíta had guessed right: it was not a wood, but a row of tall willows with a few leaves still fluttering on them here and there. They had evidently been planted along the ditch round a threshing-floor. Coming up to the willows, which moaned sadly in the wind, the horse suddenly planted his forelegs above the height of the sledge, drew up his hind legs also, pulling the sledge onto higher ground, and turned to the left, no longer sinking up to his knees in snow. They were back on a road.

"Well, here we are, but heaven only knows where!" said Nikíta.

The horse kept straight along the road through the drifted snow, and before they had gone another hundred yards the straight line of the dark wattle wall of a barn showed up black before them, its roof heavily covered with snow which poured down from it. After passing the barn the road turned to the wind and they drove into a snowdrift. But ahead of them was a lane with houses on either side, so evidently the snow had been blown across the road and they had to drive through the drift. And so in fact it was. Having driven through the snow they came out into a street. At the end house of the village some frozen clothes hanging on a line—shirts, one red and one white, trousers, leg-bands, and a petticoat—fluttered wildly in the wind. The white shirt in particular struggled desperately, waving its sleeves about.

"There now, either a lazy woman or a dead one has not taken her clothes down before the holiday," remarked Nikíta, looking at the fluttering shirts.

III

At the entrance to the street the wind still raged and the road was thickly covered with snow, but well within the village it was calm, warm, and cheerful. At one house a dog was barking, at another a woman, covering her head with her coat, came running from somewhere and entered the door of a hut, stopping on the threshold to have a look at the passing sledge. In the middle of the village girls could be heard singing.

Here in the village there seemed to be less wind and snow, and the frost was less keen.

"Why, this is Gríshkino," said Vasíli Andréevich.

"So it is," responded Nikíta.

It really was Gríshkino, which meant that they had gone too far to the left and had travelled some six miles, not quite in the direction they aimed at, but towards their destination for all that.

From Gríshkino to Goryáchkin was about another four miles.

In the middle of the village they almost ran into a tall man walking down the middle of the street.

"Who are you?" shouted the man, stopping the horse, and recognizing Vasíli Anderéevich he immediately took hold of the shaft, went along it hand over hand till he reached the sledge, and placed himself on the driver's seat.

He was Isáy, a peasant of Vasíli Andréevich's acquaintance, and well known as the principal horse-thief in the district.

"Ah, Vasíli Andréevich! Where are you off to?" said Isáy, enveloping Nikíta in the odour of the vodka he had drunk.

"We were going to Goryáchkin."

"And look where you've got to! You should have gone through Molchánovka."

"Should have, but didn't manage it," said Vasíli Andréevich, holding in the horse.

"That's a good horse," said Isáy, with a shrewd glance at Mukhórty, and with a practised hand he tightened the loosened knot high in the horse's bushy tail.

"Are you going to stay the night?"

"No, friend. I must get on."

"Your business must be pressing. And who is this? Ah, Nikíta Stepánych!"

"Who else?" replied Nikíta. "But I say, good friend, how are we to avoid going astray again?"

"Where can you go astray here? Turn back straight down the street and then when you come out keep straight on. Don't take to the left. You will come out onto the high road, and then turn to the right."

"And where do we turn off the high road? As in summer, or the winter way?" asked Nikíta.

"The winter way. As soon as you turn off you'll see some bushes, and opposite them there is a way-mark—a large oak, one with branches—and that's the way."

Vasíli Andréevich turned the horse back and drove through the outskirts of the village.

"Why not stay the night?" Isáy shouted after them.

But Vasíli Andréevich did not answer and touched up the horse. Four miles of good road, two of which lay through the forest, seemed easy to manage, especially as the wind was apparently quieter and the snow had stopped.

Having driven along the trodden village street, darkened here and there by fresh manure, past the yard where the clothes hung out and where the white shirt had broken loose and was now attached only by one frozen sleeve, they again came within sound of the weird moan of the willows, and again emerged on the open fields. The storm, far from ceasing, seemed to have grown yet stronger. The road was completely covered with drifting snow, and only the stakes showed that they had not lost their way. But even the stakes ahead of them were not easy to see, since the wind blew in their faces.

Vasíli Andréevich screwed up his eyes, bent down his head, and looked out for the way-marks, but trusted mainly to the horse's sagacity, letting it take its own way. And the horse really did not lose the road but followed its windings, turning now to the right and now to the left and sensing it under his feet, so that though the snow fell thicker and the wind strengthened they still continued to see way-marks now to the left and now to the right of them.

So they travelled on for about ten minutes, when suddenly, through the slanting screen of wind-driven snow, something black showed up which moved in front of the horse.

This was another sledge with fellow-travellers. Mukhórty overtook them, and struck his hoofs against the back of the sledge in front of them.

"Pass on … hey there … get in front!" cried voices from the sledge.

Vasíli Andréevich swerved aside to pass the other sledge.

In it sat three men and a woman, evidently visitors returning from a feast. One peasant was whacking the snow-covered croup of their little

horse with a long switch, and the other two sitting in front waved their arms and shouted something. The woman, completely wrapped up and covered with snow, sat drowsing and bumping at the back.

"Who are you?" shouted Vasíli Andréevich.

"From A-a-a …" was all that could be heard.

"I say, where are you from?"

"From A-a-a-a!" one of the peasants shouted with all his might, but still it was impossible to make out who they were.

"Get along! Keep up!" shouted another, ceaselessly beating his horse with the switch.

"So you're from a feast, it seems?"

"Go on, go on! Faster, Simon! Get in front! Faster!"

The wings of the sledges bumped against one another, almost got jammed but managed to separate, and the peasants' sledge began to fall behind.

Their shaggy, big-bellied horse, all covered with snow, breathed heavily under the low shaft-bow and, evidently using the last of its strength, vainly endeavoured to escape from the switch, hobbling with its short legs through the deep snow which it threw up under itself.

Its muzzle, young-looking, with the nether lip drawn up like that of a fish, nostrils distended and ears pressed back from fear, kept up for a few seconds near Nikíta's shoulder and then began to fall behind.

"Just see what liquor does!" said Nikíta. "They've tired that little horse to death. What pagans!"

For a few minutes they heard the panting of the tired little horse and the drunken shouting of the peasants. Then the panting and the shouts died away, and around them nothing could be heard but the whistling of the wind in their ears and now and then the squeak of their sledge-runners over a windswept part of the road.

This encounter cheered and enlivened Vasíli Andréevich, and he drove on more boldly without examining the way-marks, urging on the horse and trusting to him.

Nikíta had nothing to do, and as usual in such circumstances he drowsed, making up for much sleepless time. Suddenly the horse stopped and Nikíta nearly fell forward onto his nose.

"You know we're off the track again!" said Vasíli Andréevich.

"How's that?"

"Why, there are no way-marks to be seen. We must have got off the road again."

"Well, if we've lost the road we must find it," said Nikíta curtly, and getting out and stepping lightly on his pigeon-toed feet he started

once more going about on the snow.

He walked about for a long time, now disappearing and now reappearing, and finally he came back.

"There is no road here. There may be farther on," he said, getting into the sledge.

It was already growing dark. The snowstorm had not increased but had also not subsided.

"If we could only hear those peasants!" said Vasíli Andréevich.

"Well they haven't caught us up. We must have gone far astray. Or maybe they have lost their way too."

"Where are we to go then?" asked Vasíli Andréevich.

"Why, we must let the horse take its own way," said Nikíta. "He will take us right. Let me have the reins."

Vasíli Andréevich gave him the reins, the more willingly because his hands were beginning to feel frozen in his thick gloves.

Nikíta took the reins, but only held them, trying not to shake them and rejoicing at his favourite's sagacity. And indeed the clever horse, turning first one ear and then the other now to one side and then to the other, began to wheel round.

"The one thing he can't do is to talk," Nikíta kept saying. "See what he is doing! Go on, go on! You know best. That's it, that's it!"

The wind was now blowing from behind and it felt warmer.

"Yes, he's clever," Nikíta continued, admiring the horse. "A Kirgiz horse is strong but stupid. But this one—just see what he's doing with his ears! He doesn't need any telegraph. He can scent a mile off."

Before another half-hour had passed they saw something dark ahead of them—a wood or a village—and stakes again appeared to the right. They had evidently come out onto the road.

"Why, that's Gríshkino again!" Nikíta suddenly exclaimed.

And indeed, there on their left was that same barn with the snow flying from it, and farther on the same line with the frozen washing, shirts and trousers, which still fluttered desperately in the wind.

Again they drove into the street and again it grew quiet, warm, and cheerful, and again they could see the manure-stained street and hear voices and songs and the barking of a dog. It was already so dark that there were lights in some of the windows.

Halfway through the village Vasíli Andréevich turned the horse towards a large double-fronted brick house and stopped at the porch.

Nikíta went to the lighted snow-covered window, in the rays of which flying snowflakes glittered, and knocked at it with his whip.

"Who is there?" a voice replied to his knock.

"From Krestý, the Brekhunóvs, dear fellow," answered Nikíta. "Just come out for a minute."

Someone moved from the window, and a minute or two later there was the sound of the passage door as it came unstuck, then the latch of the outside door clicked and a tall white-bearded peasant, with a sheepskin coat thrown over his white holiday shirt, pushed his way out holding the door firmly against the wind, followed by a lad in a red shirt and high leather boots.

"Is that you, Andréevich?" asked the old man.

"Yes, friend, we've gone astray," said Vasíli Andréevich. "We wanted to get to Goryáchkin but found ourselves here. We went a second time but lost our way again."

"Just see how you have gone astray!" said the old man. "Petrúshka, go and open the gate!" he added, turning to the lad in the red shirt.

"All right," said the lad in a cheerful voice, and ran back into the passage.

"But we're not staying the night," said Vasíli Andréevich.

"Where will you go in the night? You'd better stay!"

"I'd be glad to, but I must go on. It's business, and it can't be helped."

"Well, warm yourself at least. The samovar is just ready."

"Warm myself? Yes, I'll do that," said Vasíli Andréevich. "It won't get darker. The moon will rise and it will be lighter. Let's go in and warm ourselves, Nikíta."

"Well, why not? Let us warm ourselves," replied Nikíta, who was stiff with cold and anxious to warm his frozen limbs.

Vasíli Andréevich went into the room with the old man, and Nikíta drove through the gate opened for him by Petrúshka, by whose advice he backed the horse under the penthouse. The ground was covered with manure and the tall bow over the horse's head caught against the beam. The hens and the cock had already settled to roost there, and clucked peevishly, clinging to the beam with their claws. The disturbed sheep shied and rushed aside trampling the frozen manure with their hooves. The dog yelped desperately with fright and anger and then burst out barking like a puppy at the stranger.

Nikíta talked to them all, excused himself to the fowls and assured them that he would not disturb them again, rebuked the sheep for being frightened without knowing why, and kept soothing the dog, while he tied up the horse.

"Now that will be all right," he said, knocking the snow off his clothes. "Just hear how he barks!" he added, turning to the dog. "Be

quiet, stupid! Be quiet. You are only troubling yourself for nothing. We're not thieves, we're friends. …"

"And these are, it's said, the three domestic counsellors," remarked the lad, and with his strong arms he pushed under the pent-roof the sledge that had remained outside.

"Why counsellors?" asked Nikíta.

"That's what is printed in Paulson. A thief creeps to a house—the dog barks, that means 'Be on your guard!' The cock crows, that means, 'Get up!' The cat licks herself—that means, 'A welcome guest is coming. Get ready to receive him!' " said the lad with a smile.

Petrúshka could read and write and knew Paulson's primer, his only book, almost by heart, and he was fond of quoting sayings from it that he thought suited the occasion, especially when he had had something to drink, as today.

"That's so," said Nikíta.

"You must be chilled through and through," said Petrúshka.

"Yes, I am rather," said Nikíta, and they went across the yard and the passage into the house.

IV

The household to which Vasíli Andréevich had come was one of the richest in the village. The family had five allotments, besides renting other land. They had six horses, three cows, two calves, and some twenty sheep. There were twenty-two members belonging to the homestead: four married sons, six grandchildren (one of whom, Petrúshka, was married), two great-grandchildren, three orphans, and four daughters-in-law with their babies. It was one of the few homesteads that remained still undivided, but even here the dull internal work of disintegration which would inevitably lead to separation had already begun, starting as usual among the women. Two sons were living in Moscow as water-carriers, and one was in the army. At home now were the old man and his wife, their second son who managed the homestead, the eldest who had come from Moscow for the holiday, and all the women and children. Besides these members of the family there was a visitor, a neighbour who was godfather to one of the children.

Over the table in the room hung a lamp with a shade, which brightly lit up the tea-things, a bottle of vodka, and some refreshments, besides illuminating the brick walls, which in the far corner were hung with icons on both sides of which were pictures. At the head of the table

sat Vasíli Andréevich in a black sheepskin coat, sucking his frozen moustache and observing the room and the people around him with his prominent hawk-like eyes. With him sat the old, bald, white-bearded master of the house in a white homespun shirt, and next him the son home from Moscow for the holiday—a man with a sturdy back and powerful shoulders and clad in a thin print shirt—then the second son, also broad-shouldered, who acted as head of the house, and then a lean red-haired peasant—the neighbour.

Having had a drink of vodka and something to eat, they were about to take tea, and the samovar standing on the floor beside the brick oven was already humming. The children could be seen in the top bunks and on the top of the oven. A woman sat on a lower bunk with a cradle beside her. The old housewife, her face covered with wrinkles which wrinkled even her lips, was waiting on Vasíli Andréevich.

As Nikíta entered the house she was offering her guest a small tumbler of thick glass which she had just filled with vodka.

"Don't refuse, Vasíli Andréevich, you mustn't! Wish us a merry feast. Drink it, dear!" she said.

The sight and smell of vodka, especially now when he was chilled through and tired out, much disturbed Nikíta's mind. He frowned, and having shaken the snow off his cap and coat, stopped in front of the icons as if not seeing anyone, crossed himself three times, and bowed to the icons. Then, turning to the old master of the house and bowing first to him, then to all those at table, then to the women who stood by the oven, and muttering: "A merry holiday!" he began taking off his outer things without looking at the table.

"Why, you're all covered with hoarfrost, old fellow!" said the eldest brother, looking at Nikíta's snow-covered face, eyes, and beard.

Nikíta took off his coat, shook it again, hung it up beside the oven, and came up to the table. He too was offered vodka. He went through a moment of painful hesitation and nearly took up the glass and emptied the clear fragrant liquid down his throat, but he glanced at Vasíli Andréevich, remembered his oath and the boots that he had sold for drink, recalled the cooper, remembered his son for whom he had promised to buy a horse by spring, sighed, and declined it.

"I don't drink, thank you kindly," he said frowning, and sat down on a bench near the second window.

"How's that?" asked the eldest brother.

"I just don't drink," replied Nikíta without lifting his eyes but looking askance at his scanty beard and moustache and getting the icicles out of them.

"It's not good for him," said Vasíli Andréevich, munching a cracknel after emptying his glass.

"Well, then, have some tea," said the kindly old hostess. "You must be chilled through, good soul. Why are you women dawdling so with the samovar?"

"It is ready," said one of the young women, and after flicking with her apron the top of the samovar which was now boiling over, she carried it with an effort to the table, raised it, and set it down with a thud.

Meanwhile Vasíli Andréevich was telling how he had lost his way, how they had come back twice to this same village, and how they had gone astray and had met some drunken peasants. Their hosts were surprised, explained where and why they had missed their way, said who the tipsy people they had met were, and told them how they ought to go.

"A little child could find the way to Molchánovka from here. All you have to do is to take the right turning from the high road. There's a bush you can see just there. But you didn't even get that far!" said the neighbour.

"You'd better stay the night. The women will make up beds for you," said the old woman persuasively.

"You could go on in the morning and it would be pleasanter," said the old man, confirming what his wife had said.

"I can't, friend. Business!" said Vasíli Andréevich. "Lose an hour and you can't catch it up in a year," he added, remembering the grove and the dealers who might snatch that deal from him. "We shall get there, shan't we?" he said, turning to Nikíta.

Nikíta did not answer for some time, apparently still intent on thawing out his beard and moustache.

"If only we don't go astray again," he replied gloomily. He was gloomy because he passionately longed for some vodka, and the only thing that could assuage that longing was tea and he had not yet been offered any.

"But we have only to reach the turning and then we shan't go wrong. The road will be through the forest the whole way," said Vasíli Andréevich.

"It's just as you please, Vasíli Andréevich. If we're to go, let us go," said Nikíta, taking the glass of tea he was offered.

"We'll drink our tea and be off."

Nikíta said nothing but only shook his head, and carefully pouring some tea into his saucer began warming his hands, the fingers of which

were always swollen with hard work, over the steam. Then, biting off a tiny bit of sugar, he bowed to his hosts, said, "Your health!" and drew in the steaming liquid.

"If somebody would see us as far as the turning," said Vasíli Andréevich.

"Well, we can do that," said the eldest son. "Petrúshka will harness and go that far with you."

"Well, then, put in the horse, lad, and I shall be thankful to you for it."

"Oh, what for, dear man?" said the kindly old woman. "We are heartily glad to do it."

"Petrúshka, go and put in the mare," said the eldest brother.

"All right," replied Petrúshka with a smile, and promptly snatching his cap down from a nail he ran away to harness.

While the horse was being harnessed the talk returned to the point at which it had stopped when Vasíli Andréevich drove up to the window. The old man had been complaining to his neighbour, the village elder, about his third son who had not sent him anything for the holiday though he had sent a French shawl to his wife.

"The young people are getting out of hand," said the old man.

"And how they do!" said the neighbour. "There's no managing them! They know too much. There's Demóchkin now, who broke his father's arm. It's all from being too clever, it seems."

Nikíta listened, watched their faces, and evidently would have liked to share in the conversation, but he was too busy drinking his tea and only nodded his head approvingly. He emptied one tumbler after another and grew warmer and warmer and more and more comfortable. The talk continued on the same subject for a long time—the harmfulness of a household dividing up—and it was clearly not an abstract discussion but concerned the question of a separation in that house; a separation demanded by the second son who sat there morosely silent.

It was evidently a sore subject and absorbed them all, but out of propriety they did not discuss their private affairs before strangers. At last, however, the old man could not restrain himself, and with tears in his eyes declared that he would not consent to a breakup of the family during his lifetime, that his house was prospering, thank God, but that if they separated they would all have to go begging.

"Just like the Matvéevs," said the neighbour. "They used to have a proper house, but now they've split up none of them has anything."

"And that is what you want to happen to us," said the old man, turning to his son.

The son made no reply and there was an awkward pause. The silence was broken by Petrúshka, who having harnessed the horse had returned to the hut a few minutes before this and had been listening all the time with a smile.

"There's a fable about that in Paulson," he said. "A father gave his sons a broom to break. At first they could not break it, but when they took it twig by twig they broke it easily. And it's the same here," and he gave a broad smile. "I'm ready!" he added.

"If you're ready, let's go," said Vasíli Andréevich. "And as to separating, don't you allow it, Grandfather. You got everything together and you're the master. Go to the Justice of the Peace. He'll say how things should be done."

"He carries on so, carries on so," the old man continued in a whining tone. "There's no doing anything with him. It's as if the devil possessed him."

Nikíta having meanwhile finished his fifth tumbler of tea laid it on its side instead of turning it upside down, hoping to be offered a sixth glass. But there was no more water in the samovar, so the hostess did not fill it up for him. Besides, Vasíli Andréevich was putting his things on, so there was nothing for it but for Nikíta to get up too, put back into the sugar-basin the lump of sugar he had nibbled all round, wipe his perspiring face with the skirt of his sheepskin, and go to put on his overcoat.

Having put it on he sighed deeply, thanked his hosts, said goodbye, and went out of the warm bright room into the cold dark passage, through which the wind was howling and where snow was blowing through the cracks of the shaking door, and from there into the yard.

Petrúshka stood in his sheepskin in the middle of the yard by his horse, repeating some lines from Paulson's primer. He said with a smile:

> "Storms with mist the sky conceal,
> Snowy circles wheeling wild.
> Now like savage beast 'twill howl,
> And now 'tis wailing like a child."

Nikíta nodded approvingly as he arranged the reins.

The old man, seeing Vasíli Andréevich off, brought a lantern into the passage to show him a light, but it was blown out at once. And even in the yard it was evident that the snowstorm had become more violent.

"Well, this is weather!" thought Vasíli Andréevich. "Perhaps we may not get there after all. But there is nothing to be done. Business! Besides, we have got ready, our host's horse has been harnessed, and we'll get there with God's help!"

Their aged host also thought they ought not to go, but he had already tried to persuade them to stay and had not been listened to.

"It's no use asking them again. Maybe my age makes me timid. They'll get there all right, and at least we shall get to bed in good time and without any fuss," he thought.

Petrúshka did not think of danger. He knew the road and the whole district so well, and the lines about "snowy circles wheeling wild" described what was happening outside so aptly that it cheered him up. Nikíta did not wish to go at all, but he had been accustomed not to have his own way and to serve others for so long that there was no one to hinder the departing travellers.

V

Vasíli Andréevich went over to his sledge, found it with difficulty in the darkness, climbed in and took the reins.

"Go on in front!" he cried.

Petrúshka kneeling in his low sledge started his horse. Mukhórty, who had been neighing for some time past, now scenting a mare ahead of him started after her, and they drove out into the street. They drove again through the outskirts of the village and along the same road, past the yard where the frozen linen had hung (which, however, was no longer to be seen), past the same barn, which was now snowed up almost to the roof and from which the snow was still endlessly pouring past the same dismally moaning, whistling, and swaying willows, and again entered into the sea of blustering snow raging from above and below. The wind was so strong that when it blew from the side and the travellers steered against it, it tilted the sledges and turned the horses to one side. Petrúshka drove his good mare in front at a brisk trot and kept shouting lustily. Mukhórty pressed after her.

After travelling so for about ten minutes, Petrúshka turned round and shouted something. Neither Vasíli Andréevich nor Nikíta could hear anything because of the wind, but they guessed that they had arrived at the turning. In fact Petrúshka had turned to the right, and now the wind that had blown from the side blew straight in their faces, and through the snow they saw something dark on their right. It was

the bush at the turning.

"Well now, God speed you!"

"Thank you, Petrúshka!"

"Storms with mist the sky conceal!" shouted Petrúshka as he disappeared.

"There's a poet for you!" muttered Vasíli Andréevich, pulling at the reins.

"Yes, a fine lad—a true peasant," said Nikíta.

They drove on.

Nikíta, wrapping his coat closely about him and pressing his head down so close to his shoulders that his short beard covered his throat, sat silently, trying not to lose the warmth he had obtained while drinking tea in the house. Before him he saw the straight lines of the shafts which constantly deceived him into thinking they were on a well-travelled road, and the horse's swaying crupper with his knotted tail blown to one side, and farther ahead the high shaft-bow and the swaying head and neck of the horse with its waving mane. Now and then he caught sight of a way-sign, so that he knew they were still on a road and that there was nothing for him to be concerned about.

Vasíli Andréevich drove on, leaving it to the horse to keep to the road. But Mukhórty, though he had had a breathing-space in the village, ran reluctantly, and seemed now and then to get off the road, so that Vasíli Andréevich had repeatedly to correct him.

"Here's a stake to the right, and another, and here's a third," Vasíli Andréevich counted, "and here in front is the forest," thought he, as he looked at something dark in front of him. But what had seemed to him a forest was only a bush. They passed the bush and drove on for another hundred yards but there was no fourth way-mark nor any forest.

"We must reach the forest soon," thought Vasíli Andréevich, and animated by the vodka and the tea he did not stop but shook the reins, and the good obedient horse responded, now ambling, now slowly trotting in the direction in which he was sent, though he knew that he was not going the right way. Ten minutes went by, but there was still no forest.

"There now, we must be astray again," said Vasíli Andréevich, pulling up.

Nikíta silently got out of the sledge and holding his coat, which the wind now wrapped closely about him and now almost tore off, started to feel about in the snow, going first to one side and then to the other. Three or four times he was completely lost to sight. At last he returned

and took the reins from Vasíli Andréevich's hand.

"We must go to the right," he said sternly and peremptorily, as he turned the horse.

"Well, if it's to the right, go to the right," said Vasíli Andréevich, yielding up the reins to Nikíta and thrusting his freezing hands into his sleeves.

Nikíta did not reply.

"Now then, friend, stir yourself!" he shouted to the horse, but in spite of the shake of the reins Mukhórty moved only at a walk.

The snow in places was up to his knees, and the sledge moved by fits and starts with his every movement.

Nikíta took the whip that hung over the front of the sledge and struck him once. The good horse, unused to the whip, sprang forward and moved at a trot, but immediately fell back into an amble and then to a walk. So they went on for five minutes. It was dark and the snow whirled from above and rose from below, so that sometimes the shaft-bow could not be seen. At times the sledge seemed to stand still and the field to run backwards. Suddenly the horse stopped abruptly, evidently aware of something close in front of him. Nikíta again sprang lightly out, throwing down the reins, and went ahead to see what had brought him to a standstill, but hardly had he made a step in front of the horse before his feet slipped and he went rolling down an incline.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" he said to himself as he fell, and he tried to stop his fall but could not, and only stopped when his feet plunged into a thick layer of snow that had drifted to the bottom of the hollow.

The fringe of a drift of snow that hung on the edge of the hollow, disturbed by Nikíta's fall, showered down on him and got inside his collar.

"What a thing to do!" said Nikíta reproachfully, addressing the drift and the hollow and shaking the snow from under his collar.

"Nikíta! Hey, Nikíta!" shouted Vasíli Andréevich from above.

But Nikíta did not reply. He was too occupied in shaking out the snow and searching for the whip he had dropped when rolling down the incline. Having found the whip he tried to climb straight up the bank where he had rolled down, but it was impossible to do so: he kept rolling down again, and so he had to go along at the foot of the hollow to find a way up. About seven yards farther on he managed with difficulty to crawl up the incline on all fours, then he followed the edge of the hollow back to the place where the horse should have been. He could not see either horse or sledge, but as he walked against the wind he heard Vasíli Andréevich's shouts and Mukhórty's neighing,

calling him.

"I'm coming! I'm coming! What are you cackling for?" he muttered.

Only when he had come up to the sledge could he make out the horse, and Vasíli Andréevich standing beside it and looking gigantic.

"Where the devil did you vanish to? We must go back, if only to Gríshkino," he began reproaching Nikíta.

"I'd be glad to get back, Vasíli Andréevich, but which way are we to go? There is such a ravine here that if we once get in it we shan't get out again. I got stuck so fast there myself that I could hardly get out."

"What shall we do, then? We can't stay here! We must go somewhere!" said Vasíli Andréevich.

Nikíta said nothing. He seated himself in the sledge with his back to the wind, took off his boots, shook out the snow that had got into them, and taking some straw from the bottom of the sledge, carefully plugged with it a hole in his left boot.

Vasíli Andréevich remained silent, as though now leaving everything to Nikíta. Having put his boots on again, Nikíta drew his feet into the sledge, put on his mittens and took up the reins, and directed the horse along the side of the ravine. But they had not gone a hundred yards before the horse again stopped short. The ravine was in front of him again.

Nikíta again climbed out and again trudged about in the snow. He did this for a considerable time and at last appeared from the opposite side to that from which he had started.

"Vasíli Andréevich, are you alive?" he called out.

"Here!" replied Vasíli Andréevich. "Well, what now?"

"I can't make anything out. It's too dark. There's nothing but ravines. We must drive against the wind again."

They set off once more. Again Nikíta went stumbling through the snow, again he fell in, again climbed out and trudged about, and at last quite out of breath he sat down beside the sledge.

"Well, how now?" asked Vasíli Andréevich.

"Why, I am quite worn out and the horse won't go."

"Then what's to be done?"

"Why, wait a minute."

Nikíta went away again but soon returned.

"Follow me!" he said, going in front of the horse.

Vasíli Andréevich no longer gave orders but implicitly did what Nikíta told him.

"Here, follow me!" Nikíta shouted, stepping quickly to the right, and seizing the rein he led Mukhórty down towards a snowdrift.

At first the horse held back, then he jerked forward, hoping to leap the drift, but he had not the strength and sank into it up to his collar.

"Get out!" Nikíta called to Vasíli Andréevich who still sat in the sledge, and taking hold of one shaft he moved the sledge closer to the horse. "It's hard, brother!" he said to Mukhórty, "but it can't be helped. Make an effort! Now, now, just a little one!" he shouted.

The horse gave a tug, then another, but failed to clear himself and settled down again as if considering something.

"Now, brother, this won't do!" Nikíta admonished him. "Now once more!"

Again Nikíta tugged at the shaft on his side, and Vasíli Andréevich did the same on the other.

Mukhórty lifted his head and then gave a sudden jerk.

"That's it! That's it!" cried Nikíta. "Don't be afraid—you won't sink!"

One plunge, another, and a third, and at last Mukhórty was out of the snowdrift, and stood still, breathing heavily and shaking the snow off himself. Nikíta wished to lead him farther, but Vasíli Andréevich, in his two fur coats, was so out of breath that he could not walk farther and dropped into the sledge.

"Let me get my breath!" he said, unfastening the kerchief with which he had tied the collar of his fur coat at the village.

"It's all right here. You lie there," said Nikíta. "I will lead him along." And with Vasíli Andréevich in the sledge he led the horse by the bridle about ten paces down and then up a slight rise, and stopped.

The place where Nikíta had stopped was not completely in the hollow where the snow sweeping down from the hillocks might have buried them altogether, but still it was partly sheltered from the wind by the side of the ravine. There were moments when the wind seemed to abate a little, but that did not last long and as if to make up for that respite the storm swept down with tenfold vigour and tore and whirled the more fiercely. Such a gust struck them at the moment when Vasíli Andréevich, having recovered his breath, got out of the sledge and went up to Nikíta to consult him as to what they should do. They both bent down involuntarily and waited till the violence of the squall should have passed. Mukhórty too laid back his ears and shook his head discontentedly. As soon as the violence of the blast had abated a little, Nikíta took off his mittens, stuck them into his belt, breathed onto his hands, and began to undo the straps of the shaft-bow.

"What's that you are doing there?" asked Vasíli Andréevich.

"Unharnessing. What else is there to do? I have no strength left," said Nikíta as though excusing himself.

"Can't we drive somewhere?"

"No, we can't. We shall only kill the horse. Why, the poor beast is not himself now," said Nikíta, pointing to the horse, which was standing submissively waiting for what might come, with his steep wet sides heaving heavily. "We shall have to stay the night here," he said, as if preparing to spend the night at an inn, and he proceeded to unfasten the collar-straps. The buckles came undone.

"But shan't we be frozen?" remarked Vasíli Andréevich.

"Well, if we are we can't help it," said Nikíta.

VI

Although Vasíli Andréevich felt quite warm in his two fur coats, especially after struggling in the snowdrift, a cold shiver ran down his back on realizing that he must really spend the night where they were. To calm himself he sat down in the sledge and got out his cigarettes and matches.

Nikíta meanwhile unharnessed Mukhórty. He unstrapped the belly-band and the back-band, took away the reins, loosened the collar-strap, and removed the shaft-bow, talking to him all the time to encourage him.

"Now come out! come out!" he said, leading him clear of the shafts. "Now we'll tie you up here and I'll put down some straw and take off your bridle. When you've had a bite you'll feel more cheerful."

But Mukhórty was restless and evidently not comforted by Nikíta's remarks. He stepped now on one foot and now on another, and pressed close against the sledge, turning his back to the wind and rubbing his head on Nikíta's sleeve. Then, as if not to pain Nikíta by refusing his offer of the straw he put before him, he hurriedly snatched a wisp out of the sledge, but immediately decided that it was now no time to think of straw and threw it down, and the wind instantly scattered it, carried it away, and covered it with snow.

"Now we will set up a signal," said Nikíta, and turning the front of the sledge to the wind he tied the shafts together with a strap and set them up on end in front of the sledge. "There now, when the snow covers us up, good folk will see the shafts and dig us out," he said, slapping his mittens together and putting them on. "That's what the

old folk taught us!"

Vasíli Andréevich meanwhile had unfastened his coat, and holding its skirts up for shelter, struck one sulphur match after another on the steel box. But his hands trembled, and one match after another either did not kindle or was blown out by the wind just as he was lifting it to the cigarette. At last a match did burn up, and its flame lit up for a moment the fur of his coat, his hand with the gold ring on the bent forefinger, and the snow-sprinkled oat-straw that stuck out from under the drugget. The cigarette lighted, he eagerly took a whiff or two, inhaled the smoke, let it out through his moustache, and would have inhaled again, but the wind tore off the burning tobacco and whirled it away as it had done the straw.

But even these few puffs had cheered him.

"If we must spend the night here, we must!" he said with decision. "Wait a bit, I'll arrange a flag as well," he added, picking up the kerchief which he had thrown down in the sledge after taking it from round his collar, and drawing off his gloves and standing up on the front of the sledge and stretching himself to reach the strap, he tied the handkerchief to it with a tight knot.

The kerchief immediately began to flutter wildly, now clinging round the shaft, now suddenly streaming out, stretching and flapping.

"Just see what a fine flag!" said Vasíli Andréevich, admiring his handiwork and letting himself down into the sledge. "We should be warmer together, but there's not room enough for two," he added.

"I'll find a place," said Nikíta. "But I must cover up the horse first—he sweated so, poor thing. Let go!" he added, drawing the drugget from under Vasíli Andréevich.

Having got the drugget he folded it in two, and after taking off the breechband and pad, covered Mukhórty with it.

"Anyhow it will be warmer, silly!" he said, putting back the breechband and the pad on the horse over the drugget. Then having finished that business he returned to the sledge, and addressing Vasíli Andréevich, said: "You won't need the sackcloth, will you? And let me have some straw."

And having taken these things from under Vasíli Andréevich, Nikíta went behind the sledge, dug out a hole for himself in the snow, put straw into it, wrapped his coat well round him, covered himself with the sackcloth, and pulling his cap well down seated himself on the straw he had spread, and leant against the wooden back of the sledge to shelter himself from the wind and the snow.

Vasíli Andréevich shook his head disapprovingly at what Nikíta

was doing, as in general he disapproved of the peasant's stupidity and lack of education, and he began to settle himself down for the night.

He smoothed the remaining straw over the bottom of the sledge, putting more of it under his side. Then he thrust his hands into his sleeves and settled down, sheltering his head in the corner of the sledge from the wind in front.

He did not wish to sleep. He lay and thought: thought ever of the one thing that constituted the sole aim, meaning, pleasure, and pride of his life—of how much money he had made and might still make, of how much other people he knew had made and possessed, and of how those others had made and were making it, and how he, like them, might still make much more. The purchase of the Goryáchkin grove was a matter of immense importance to him. By that one deal he hoped to make perhaps ten thousand rubles. He began mentally to reckon the value of the wood he had inspected in autumn, and on five acres of which he had counted all the trees.

"The oaks will go for sledge-runners. The undergrowth will take care of itself, and there'll still be some thirty *sázheens* of firewood left on each desyatin," said he to himself. "That means there will be at least two hundred and twenty-five rubles' worth left on each desyatin. Fifty-six desyatiins means fifty-six hundreds, and fifty-six hundreds, and fifty-six tens, and another fifty-six tens, and then fifty-six fives. …" He saw that it came out to more than twelve thousand rubles, but could not reckon it up exactly without a counting-frame. "But I won't give ten thousand, anyhow. I'll give about eight thousand with a deduction on account of the glades. I'll grease the surveyor's palm—give him a hundred rubles, or a hundred and fifty, and he'll reckon that there are some five desyatins of glade to be deducted. And he'll let it go for eight thousand. Three thousand cash down. That'll move him, no fear!" he thought, and he pressed his pocketbook with his forearm.

"God only knows how we missed the turning. The forest ought to be there, and a watchman's hut, and dogs barking. But the damned things don't bark when they're wanted." He turned his collar down from his ear and listened, but as before only the whistling of the wind could be heard, the flapping and fluttering of the kerchief tied to the shafts, and the pelting of the snow against the woodwork of the sledge. He again covered up his ear.

"If I had known I would have stayed the night. Well, no matter, we'll get there tomorrow. It's only one day lost. And the others won't travel in such weather." Then he remembered that on the 9th he had to receive payment from the butcher for his oxen. "He meant to

come himself, but he won't find me, and my wife won't know how to receive the money. She doesn't know the right way of doing things," he thought, recalling how at their party the day before she had not known how to treat the police-officer who was their guest. "Of course she's only a woman! Where could she have seen anything? In my father's time what was our house like? Just a rich peasant's house: just an oatmill and an inn—that was the whole property. But what have I done in these fifteen years? A shop, two taverns, a flour-mill, a grain-store, two farms leased out, and a house with an iron-roofed barn," he thought proudly. "Not as it was in Father's time! Who is talked of in the whole district now? Brekhunóv! And why? Because I stick to business. I take trouble, not like others who lie abed or waste their time on foolishness while I don't sleep of nights. Blizzard or no blizzard I start out. So business gets done. They think moneymaking is a joke. No, take pains and rack your brains! You get overtaken out of doors at night, like this, or keep awake night after night till the thoughts whirling in your head make the pillow turn," he meditated with pride. "They think people get on through luck. After all, the Mirónovs are now millionaires. And why? Take pains and God gives. If only He grants me health!"

The thought that he might himself be a millionaire like Mirónov, who began with nothing, so excited Vasíli Andréevich that he felt the need of talking to somebody. But there was no one to talk to. … If only he could have reached Goryáchkin he would have talked to the landlord and shown him a thing or two.

"Just see how it blows! It will snow us up so deep that we shan't be able to get out in the morning!" he thought, listening to a gust of wind that blew against the front of the sledge, bending it and lashing the snow against it. He raised himself and looked round. All he could see through the whirling darkness was Mukhórty's dark head, his back covered by the fluttering drugget, and his thick knotted tail; while all round, in front and behind, was the same fluctuating whity darkness, sometimes seeming to get a little lighter and sometimes growing denser still.

"A pity I listened to Nikíta," he thought. "We ought to have driven on. We should have come out somewhere, if only back to Gríshkino and stayed the night at Tarás's. As it is we must sit here all night. But what was I thinking about? Yes, that God gives to those who take trouble, but not to loafers, lie-abeds, or fools. I must have a smoke!"

He sat down again, got out his cigarette-case, and stretched himself flat on his stomach, screening the matches with the skirt of his coat.

But the wind found its way in and put out match after match. At last he got one to burn and lit a cigarette. He was very glad that he had managed to do what he wanted, and though the wind smoked more of the cigarette than he did, he still got two or three puffs and felt more cheerful. He again leant back, wrapped himself up, started reflecting and remembering, and suddenly and quite unexpectedly lost consciousness and fell asleep.

Suddenly something seemed to give him a push and awoke him. Whether it was Mukhórty who had pulled some straw from under him, or whether something within him had startled him, at all events it woke him, and his heart began to beat faster and faster so that the sledge seemed to tremble under him. He opened his eyes. Everything around him was just as before. "It looks lighter," he thought. "I expect it won't be long before dawn." But he at once remembered that it was lighter because the moon had risen. He sat up and looked first at the horse. Mukhórty still stood with his back to the wind, shivering all over. One side of the drugget, which was completely covered with snow, had been blown back, the breeching had slipped down and the snow-covered head with its waving forelock and mane were now more visible. Vasíli Andréevich leant over the back of the sledge and looked behind. Nikíta still sat in the same position in which he had settled himself. The sacking with which he was covered, and his legs, were thickly covered with snow.

"If only that peasant doesn't freeze to death! His clothes are so wretched. I may be held responsible for him. What shiftless people they are—such a want of education," thought Vasíli Andréevich, and he felt like taking the drugget off the horse and putting it over Nikíta, but it would be very cold to get out and move about and, moreover, the horse might freeze to death. "Why did I bring him with me? It was all her stupidity!" he thought, recalling his unloved wife, and he rolled over into his old place at the front part of the sledge. "My uncle once spent a whole night like this," he reflected, "and was all right." But another case came at once to his mind. "But when they dug Sebastian out he was dead—stiff like a frozen carcass. If I'd only stopped the night in Gríshkino all this would not have happened!"

And wrapping his coat carefully round him so that none of the warmth of the fur should be wasted but should warm him all over, neck, knees, and feet, he shut his eyes and tried to sleep again. But try as he would he could not get drowsy, on the contrary he felt wide awake and animated. Again he began counting his gains and the debts due to him, again he began bragging to himself and feeling pleased

with himself and his position, but all this was continually disturbed by a stealthily approaching fear and by the unpleasant regret that he had not remained in Gríshkino.

"How different it would be to be lying warm on a bench!"

He turned over several times in his attempts to get into a more comfortable position more sheltered from the wind, he wrapped up his legs closer, shut his eyes, and lay still. But either his legs in their strong felt boots began to ache from being bent in one position, or the wind blew in somewhere, and after lying still for a short time he again began to recall the disturbing fact that he might now have been lying quietly in the warm hut at Gríshkino. He again sat up, turned about, muffled himself up, and settled down once more.

Once he fancied that he heard a distant cockcrow. He felt glad, turned down his coat-collar and listened with strained attention, but in spite of all his efforts nothing could be heard but the wind whistling between the shafts, the flapping of the kerchief, and the snow pelting against the frame of the sledge.

Nikíta sat just as he had done all the time, not moving and not even answering Vasíli Andréevich who had addressed him a couple of times. "He doesn't care a bit—he's probably asleep!" thought Vasíli Andréevich with vexation, looking behind the sledge at Nikíta who was covered with a thick layer of snow.

Vasíli Andréevich got up and lay down again some twenty times. It seemed to him that the night would never end. "It must be getting near morning," he thought, getting up and looking around. "Let's have a look at my watch. It will be cold to unbutton, but if I only know that it's getting near morning I shall at any rate feel more cheerful. We could begin harnessing."

In the depth of his heart Vasíli Andréevich knew that it could not yet be near morning, but he was growing more and more afraid, and wished both to get to know and yet to deceive himself. He carefully undid the fastening of his sheepskin, pushed in his hand, and felt about for a long time before he got to his waistcoat. With great difficulty he managed to draw out his silver watch with its enamelled flower design, and tried to make out the time. He could not see anything without a light. Again he went down on his knees and elbows as he had done when he lighted a cigarette, got out his matches, and proceeded to strike one. This time he went to work more carefully, and feeling with his fingers for a match with the largest head and the greatest amount of phosphorus, lit it at the first try. Bringing the face of the watch under the light he could hardly believe his eyes. … It was only ten

minutes past twelve. Almost the whole night was still before him.

"Oh, how long the night is!" he thought, feeling a cold shudder run down his back, and having fastened his fur coats again and wrapped himself up, he snuggled into a corner of the sledge intending to wait patiently. Suddenly, above the monotonous roar of the wind, he clearly distinguished another new and living sound. It steadily strengthened, and having become quite clear diminished just as gradually. Beyond all doubt it was a wolf, and he was so near that the movement of his jaws as he changed his cry was brought down the wind. Vasíli Andréevich turned back the collar of his coat and listened attentively. Mukhórty too strained to listen, moving his ears, and when the wolf had ceased its howling he shifted from foot to foot and gave a warning snort. After this Vasíli Andréevich could not fall asleep again or even calm himself. The more he tried to think of his accounts, his business, his reputation, his worth and his wealth, the more and more was he mastered by fear, and regrets that he had not stayed the night at Gríshkino dominated and mingled in all his thoughts.

"Devil take the forest! Things were all right without it, thank God. Ah, if we had only put up for the night!" he said to himself. "They say it's drunkards that freeze," he thought, "and I have had some drink." And observing his sensations he noticed that he was beginning to shiver, without knowing whether it was from cold or from fear. He tried to wrap himself up and lie down as before, but could no longer do so. He could not stay in one position. He wanted to get up, to do something to master the gathering fear that was rising in him and against which he felt himself powerless. He again got out his cigarettes and matches, but only three matches were left and they were bad ones. The phosphorus rubbed off them all without lighting.

"The devil take you! Damned thing! Curse you!" he muttered, not knowing whom or what he was cursing, and he flung away the crushed cigarette. He was about to throw away the matchbox too, but checked the movement of his hand and put the box in his pocket instead. He was seized with such unrest that he could no longer remain in one spot. He climbed out of the sledge and standing with his back to the wind began to shift his belt again, fastening it lower down in the waist and tightening it.

"What's the use of lying and waiting for death? Better mount the horse and get away!" The thought suddenly occurred to him. "The horse will move when he has someone on his back. As for him," he thought of Nikíta—"it's all the same to him whether he lives or dies. What is his life worth? He won't grudge his life, but I have something

to live for, thank God."

He untied the horse, threw the reins over his neck and tried to mount, but his coats and boots were so heavy that he failed. Then he clambered up in the sledge and tried to mount from there, but the sledge tilted under his weight, and he failed again. At last he drew Mukhórty nearer to the sledge, cautiously balanced on one side of it, and managed to lie on his stomach across the horse's back. After lying like that for a while he shifted forward once and again, threw a leg over, and finally seated himself, supporting his feet on the loose breeching-straps. The shaking of the sledge awoke Nikíta. He raised himself, and it seemed to Vasíli Andréevich that he said something.

"Listen to such fools as you! Am I to die like this for nothing?" exclaimed Vasíli Andréevich. And tucking the loose skirts of his fur coat in under his knees, he turned the horse and rode away from the sledge in the direction in which he thought the forest and the forester's hut must be.

VII

From the time he had covered himself with the sackcloth and seated himself behind the sledge, Nikíta had not stirred. Like all those who live in touch with nature and have known want, he was patient and could wait for hours, even days, without growing restless or irritable. He heard his master call him, but did not answer because he did not want to move or talk. Though he still felt some warmth from the tea he had drunk and from his energetic struggle when clambering about in the snowdrift, he knew that this warmth would not last long and that he had no strength left to warm himself again by moving about, for he felt as tired as a horse when it stops and refuses to go further in spite of the whip, and its master sees that it must be fed before it can work again. The foot in the boot with a hole in it had already grown numb, and he could no longer feel his big toe. Besides that, his whole body began to feel colder and colder.

The thought that he might, and very probably would, die that night occurred to him, but did not seem particularly unpleasant or dreadful. It did not seem particularly unpleasant, because his whole life had been not a continual holiday, but on the contrary an unceasing round of toil of which he was beginning to feel weary. And it did not seem particularly dreadful, because besides the masters he had served here, like Vasíli Andréevich, he always felt himself dependent on the Chief

Master, who had sent him into this life, and he knew that when dying he would still be in that Master's power and would not be ill-used by Him. "It seems a pity to give up what one is used to and accustomed to. But there's nothing to be done, I shall get used to the new things."

"Sins?" he thought, and remembered his drunkenness, the money that had gone on drink, how he had offended his wife, his cursing, his neglect of church and of the fasts, and all the things the priest blamed him for at confession. "Of course they are sins. But then, did I take them on of myself? That's evidently how God made me. Well, and the sins? Where am I to escape to?"

So at first he thought of what might happen to him that night, and then did not return to such thoughts but gave himself up to whatever recollections came into his head of themselves. Now he thought of Martha's arrival, of the drunkenness among the workers and his own renunciation of drink, then of their present journey and of Tarás's house and the talk about the breaking-up of the family, then of his own lad, and of Mukhórty now sheltered under the drugget, and then of his master who made the sledge creak as he tossed about in it. "I expect you're sorry yourself that you started out, dear man," he thought. "It would seem hard to leave a life such as his! It's not like the likes of us."

Then all these recollections began to grow confused and got mixed in his head, and he fell asleep.

But when Vasíli Andréevich, getting on the horse, jerked the sledge, against the back of which Nikíta was leaning, and it shifted away and hit him in the back with one of its runners, he awoke and had to change his position whether he liked it or not. Straightening his legs with difficulty and shaking the snow off them he got up, and an agonizing cold immediately penetrated his whole body. On making out what was happening he called to Vasíli Andréevich to leave him the drugget which the horse no longer needed, so that he might wrap himself in it.

But Vasíli Andréevich did not stop, but disappeared amid the powdery snow.

Left alone Nikíta considered for a moment what he should do. He felt that he had not the strength to go off in search of a house. It was no longer possible to sit down in his old place—it was by now all filled with snow. He felt that he could not get warmer in the sledge either, for there was nothing to cover himself with, and his coat and sheepskin no longer warmed him at all. He felt as cold as though he had nothing on but a shirt. He became frightened. "Lord, heavenly Father!" he muttered, and was comforted by the consciousness that

he was not alone but that there was One who heard him and would not abandon him. He gave a deep sigh, and keeping the sackcloth over his head he got inside the sledge and lay down in the place where his master had been.

But he could not get warm in the sledge either. At first he shivered all over, then the shivering ceased and little by little he began to lose consciousness. He did not know whether he was dying or falling asleep, but felt equally prepared for the one as for the other.

VIII

Meanwhile Vasíli Andréevich, with his feet and the ends of the reins, urged the horse on in the direction in which for some reason he expected the forest and forester's hut to be. The snow covered his eyes and the wind seemed intent on stopping him, but bending forward and constantly lapping his coat over and pushing it between himself and the cold harness pad which prevented him from sitting properly, he kept urging the horse on. Mukhórty ambled on obediently though with difficulty, in the direction in which he was driven.

Vasíli Andréevich rode for about five minutes straight ahead, as he thought, seeing nothing but the horse's head and the white waste, and hearing only the whistle of the wind about the horse's ears and his coat collar.

Suddenly a dark patch showed up in front of him. His heart beat with joy, and he rode towards the object, already seeing in imagination the walls of village houses. But the dark patch was not stationary, it kept moving; and it was not a village but some tall stalks of wormwood sticking up through the snow on the boundary between two fields, and desperately tossing about under the pressure of the wind which beat it all to one side and whistled through it. The sight of that wormwood tormented by the pitiless wind made Vasíli Andréevich shudder, he knew not why, and he hurriedly began urging the horse on, not noticing that when riding up to the wormwood he had quite changed his direction and was now heading the opposite way, though still imagining that he was riding towards where the hut should be. But the horse kept making towards the right, and Vasíli Andréevich kept guiding it to the left.

Again something dark appeared in front of him. Again he rejoiced, convinced that now it was certainly a village. But once more it was the same boundary line overgrown with wormwood, once more the same

wormwood desperately tossed by the wind and carrying unreasoning terror to his heart. But its being the same wormwood was not all, for beside it there was a horse's track partly snowed over. Vasíli Andréevich stopped, stooped down and looked carefully. It was a horse-track only partially covered with snow, and could be none but his own horse's hoofprints. He had evidently gone round in a small circle. "I shall perish like that!" he thought, and not to give way to his terror he urged on the horse still more, peering into the snowy darkness in which he saw only flitting and fitful points of light. Once he thought he heard the barking of dogs or the howling of wolves, but the sounds were so faint and indistinct that he did not know whether he heard them or merely imagined them, and he stopped and began to listen intently.

Suddenly some terrible, deafening cry resounded near his ears, and everything shivered and shook under him. He seized Mukhórty's neck, but that too was shaking all over and the terrible cry grew still more frightful. For some seconds Vasíli Andréevich could not collect himself or understand what was happening. It was only that Mukhórty, whether to encourage himself or to call for help, had neighed loudly and resonantly. "Ugh, you wretch! How you frightened me, damn you!" thought Vasíli Andréevich. But even when he understood the cause of his terror he could not shake it off.

"I must calm myself and think things over," he said to himself, but yet he could not stop, and continued to urge the horse on, without noticing that he was now going with the wind instead of against it. His body, especially between his legs where it touched the pad of the harness and was not covered by his overcoats, was getting painfully cold, especially when the horse walked slowly. His legs and arms trembled and his breathing came fast. He saw himself perishing amid this dreadful snowy waste, and could see no means of escape.

Suddenly the horse under him tumbled into something and, sinking into a snowdrift, began to plunge and fell on his side. Vasíli Andréevich jumped off, and in so doing dragged to one side the breechband on which his foot was resting, and twisted round the pad to which he held as he dismounted. As soon as he had jumped off, the horse struggled to his feet, plunged forward, gave one leap and another, neighed again, and dragging the drugget and the breechband after him, disappeared, leaving Vasíli Andréevich alone on the snowdrift.

The latter pressed on after the horse, but the snow lay so deep and his coats were so heavy that, sinking above his knees at each step, he stopped breathless after taking not more than twenty steps. "The copse, the oxen, the leasehold, the shop, the tavern, the house with

the iron-roofed barn, and my heir," thought he. "How can I leave all that? What does this mean? It cannot be!" These thoughts flashed through his mind. Then he thought of the wormwood tossed by the wind, which he had twice ridden past, and he was seized with such terror that he did not believe in the reality of what was happening to him. "Can this be a dream?" he thought, and tried to wake up but could not. It was real snow that lashed his face and covered him and chilled his right hand from which he had lost the glove, and this was a real desert in which he was now left alone like that wormwood, awaiting an inevitable, speedy, and meaningless death.

"Queen of Heaven! Holy Father Nicholas, teacher of temperance!" he thought, recalling the service of the day before and the holy icon with its black face and gilt frame, and the tapers which he sold to be set before that icon and which were almost immediately brought back to him scarcely burnt at all, and which he put away in the store-chest. He began to pray to that same Nicholas the Wonder-Worker to save him, promising him a thanksgiving service and some candles. But he clearly and indubitably realized that the icon, its frame, the candles, the priest, and the thanksgiving service, though very important and necessary in church, could do nothing for him here, and that there was and could be no connection between those candles and services and his present disastrous plight. "I must not despair," he thought. "I must follow the horse's track before it is snowed under. He will lead me out, or I may even catch him. Only I must not hurry, or I shall stick fast and be more lost than ever."

But in spite of his resolution to go quietly, he rushed forward and even ran, continually falling, getting up and falling again. The horse's track was already hardly visible in places where the snow did not lie deep. "I am lost!" thought Vasíli Andréevich. "I shall lose the track and not catch the horse." But at that moment he saw something black. It was Mukhórty, and not only Mukhórty, but the sledge with the shafts and the kerchief. Mukhórty, with the sacking and the breechband twisted round to one side, was standing not in his former place but nearer to the shafts, shaking his head which the reins he was stepping on drew downwards. It turned out that Vasíli Andréevich had sunk in the same ravine Nikíta had previously fallen into, and that Mukhórty had been bringing him back to the sledge and he had got off his back no more than fifty paces from where the sledge was.

IX

Having stumbled back to the sledge Vasíli Andréevich caught hold of it and for a long time stood motionless, trying to calm himself and recover his breath. Nikíta was not in his former place, but something, already covered with snow, was lying in the sledge and Vasíli Andréevich concluded that this was Nikíta. His terror had now quite left him, and if he felt any fear it was lest the dreadful terror should return that he had experienced when on the horse and especially when he was left alone in the snowdrift. At any cost he had to avoid that terror, and to keep it away he must do something—occupy himself with something. And the first thing he did was to turn his back to the wind and open his fur coat. Then, as soon as he recovered his breath a little, he shook the snow out of his boots and out of his left-hand glove (the right-hand glove was hopelessly lost and by this time probably lying somewhere under a dozen inches of snow); then as was his custom when going out of his shop to buy grain from the peasants, he pulled his girdle low down and tightened it and prepared for action. The first thing that occurred to him was to free Mukhórty's leg from the rein. Having done that, and tethered him to the iron cramp at the front of the sledge where he had been before, he was going round the horse's quarters to put the breechband and pad straight and cover him with the cloth, but at that moment he noticed that something was moving in the sledge and Nikíta's head rose up out of the snow that covered it. Nikíta, who was half frozen, rose with great difficulty and sat up, moving his hand before his nose in a strange manner just as if he were driving away flies. He waved his hand and said something, and seemed to Vasíli Andréevich to be calling him. Vasíli Andréevich left the cloth unadjusted and went up to the sledge.

"What is it?" he asked. "What are you saying?"

"I'm dy … ing, that's what," said Nikíta brokenly and with difficulty. "Give what is owing to me to my lad, or to my wife, no matter."

"Why, are you really frozen?" asked Vasíli Andréevich.

"I feel it's my death. Forgive me for Christ's sake …" said Nikíta in a tearful voice, continuing to wave his hand before his face as if driving away flies.

Vasíli Andréevich stood silent and motionless for half a minute. Then suddenly, with the same resolution with which he used to strike hands when making a good purchase, he took a step back and turning up his sleeves began raking the snow off Nikíta and out of the sledge. Having done this he hurriedly undid his girdle, opened out his fur coat,

and having pushed Nikíta down, lay down on top of him, covering him not only with his fur coat but with the whole of his body, which glowed with warmth. After pushing the skirts of his coat between Nikíta and the sides of the sledge, and holding down its hem with his knees, Vasíli Andréevich lay like that face down, with his head pressed against the front of the sledge. Here he no longer heard the horse's movements or the whistling of the wind, but only Nikíta's breathing. At first and for a long time Nikíta lay motionless, then he sighed deeply and moved.

"There, and you say you are dying! Lie still and get warm, that's our way …" began Vasíli Andréevich.

But to his great surprise he could say no more, for tears came to his eyes and his lower jaw began to quiver rapidly. He stopped speaking and only gulped down the risings in his throat. "Seems I was badly frightened and have gone quite weak," he thought. But this weakness was not only unpleasant, but gave him a peculiar joy such as he had never felt before.

"That's our way!" he said to himself, experiencing a strange and solemn tenderness. He lay like that for a long time, wiping his eyes on the fur of his coat and tucking under his knee the right skirt, which the wind kept turning up.

But he longed so passionately to tell somebody of his joyful condition that he said: "Nikíta!"

"It's comfortable, warm!" came a voice from beneath.

"There, you see, friend, I was going to perish. And you would have been frozen, and I should have …"

But again his jaws began to quiver and his eyes to fill with tears, and he could say no more.

"Well, never mind," he thought. "I know about myself what I know."

He remained silent and lay like that for a long time.

Nikíta kept him warm from below and his fur coats from above. Only his hands, with which he kept his coat-skirts down round Nikíta's sides, and his legs which the wind kept uncovering, began to freeze, especially his right hand which had no glove. But he did not think of his legs or of his hands but only of how to warm the peasant who was lying under him. He looked out several times at Mukhórty and could see that his back was uncovered and the drugget and breeching lying on the snow, and that he ought to get up and cover him, but he could not bring himself to leave Nikíta and disturb even for a moment the joyous condition he was in. He no longer felt any kind of terror.

"No fear, we shan't lose him this time!" he said to himself, referring

to his getting the peasant warm with the same boastfulness with which he spoke of his buying and selling.

Vasíli Andréevich lay in that way for one hour, another, and a third, but he was unconscious of the passage of time. At first impressions of the snowstorm, the sledge-shafts, and the horse with the shaft-bow shaking before his eyes, kept passing through his mind, then he remembered Nikíta lying under him, then recollections of the festival, his wife, the police-officer, and the box of candles, began to mingle with these; then again Nikíta, this time lying under that box, then the peasants, customers and traders, and the white walls of his house with its iron roof with Nikíta lying underneath, presented themselves to his imagination. Afterwards all these impressions blended into one nothingness. As the colours of the rainbow unite into one white light, so all these different impressions mingled into one, and he fell asleep.

For a long time he slept without dreaming, but just before dawn the visions recommenced. It seemed to him that he was standing by the box of tapers and that Tíkhon's wife was asking for a five kopeck taper for the Church fête. He wished to take one out and give it to her, but his hands would not lift, being held tight in his pockets. He wanted to walk round the box but his feet would not move and his new clean goloshes had grown to the stone floor, and he could neither lift them nor get his feet out of the goloshes. Then the taper-box was no longer a box but a bed, and suddenly Vasíli Andréevich saw himself lying in his bed at home. He was lying in his bed and could not get up. Yet it was necessary for him to get up because Iván Matvéich, the police-officer, would soon call for him and he had to go with him—either to bargain for the forest or to put Mukhórty's breeching straight.

He asked his wife: "Nikoláevna, hasn't he come yet?" "No, he hasn't," she replied. He heard someone drive up to the front steps. "It must be him." "No, he's gone past." "Nikoláevna! I say, Nikoláevna, isn't he here yet?" "No." He was still lying on his bed and could not get up, but was always waiting. And this waiting was uncanny and yet joyful. Then suddenly his joy was completed. He whom he was expecting came; not Iván Matvéich the police-officer, but someone else—yet it was he whom he had been waiting for. He came and called him; and it was he who had called him and told him to lie down on Nikíta. And Vasíli Andréevich was glad that that one had come for him.

"I'm coming!" he cried joyfully, and that cry awoke him, but woke him up not at all the same person he had been when he fell asleep. He tried to get up but could not, tried to move his arm and could not, to

move his leg and also could not, to turn his head and could not. He was surprised but not at all disturbed by this. He understood that this was death, and was not at all disturbed by that either.

He remembered that Nikíta was lying under him and that he had got warm and was alive, and it seemed to him that he was Nikíta and Nikíta was he, and that his life was not in himself but in Nikíta. He strained his ears and heard Nikíta breathing and even slightly snoring. "Nikíta is alive, so I too am alive!" he said to himself triumphantly.

And he remembered his money, his shop, his house, the buying and selling, and Mirónov's millions, and it was hard for him to understand why that man, called Vasíli Brekhunóv, had troubled himself with all those things with which he had been troubled.

"Well, it was because he did not know what the real thing was," he thought, concerning that Vasíli Brekhunóv. "He did not know, but now I know and know for sure. Now I know!" And again he heard the voice of the one who had called him before. "I'm coming! Coming!" he responded gladly, and his whole being was filled with joyful emotion. He felt himself free and that nothing could hold him back any longer.

After that Vasíli Andréevich neither saw, heard, nor felt anything more in this world.

All around the snow still eddied. The same whirlwinds of snow circled about, covering the dead Vasíli Andréevich's fur coat, the shivering Mukhórty, the sledge, now scarcely to be seen, and Nikíta lying at the bottom of it, kept warm beneath his dead master.

X

Nikíta awoke before daybreak. He was aroused by the cold that had begun to creep down his back. He had dreamt that he was coming from the mill with a load of his master's flour and when crossing the stream had missed the bridge and let the cart get stuck. And he saw that he had crawled under the cart and was trying to lift it by arching his back. But strange to say the cart did not move, it stuck to his back and he could neither lift it nor get out from under it. It was crushing the whole of his loins. And how cold it felt! Evidently he must crawl out. "Have done!" he exclaimed to whoever was pressing the cart down on him. "Take out the sacks!" But the cart pressed down colder and colder, and then he heard a strange knocking, awoke completely, and remembered everything. The cold cart was his dead and frozen master lying upon him. And the knock was produced by

Mukhórty, who had twice struck the sledge with his hoof.

"Andréevich! Eh, Andréevich!" Nikíta called cautiously, beginning to realize the truth, and straightening his back. But Vasíli Andréevich did not answer and his stomach and legs were stiff and cold and heavy like iron weights.

"He must have died! May the Kingdom of Heaven be his!" thought Nikíta.

He turned his head, dug with his hand through the snow about him and opened his eyes. It was daylight; the wind was whistling as before between the shafts, and the snow was falling in the same way, except that it was no longer driving against the frame of the sledge but silently covered both sledge and horse deeper and deeper, and neither the horse's movements nor his breathing were any longer to be heard.

"He must have frozen too," thought Nikíta of Mukhórty, and indeed those hoof knocks against the sledge, which had awakened Nikíta, were the last efforts the already numbed Mukhórty had made to keep on his feet before dying.

"O Lord God, it seems Thou art calling me too!" said Nikíta. "Thy Holy Will be done. But it's uncanny. … Still, a man can't die twice and must die once. If only it would come soon!"

And he again drew in his head, closed his eyes, and became unconscious, fully convinced that now he was certainly and finally dying.

It was not till noon that day that peasants dug Vasíli Andréevich and Nikíta out of the snow with their shovels, not more than seventy yards from the road and less than half a mile from the village.

The snow had hidden the sledge, but the shafts and the kerchief tied to them were still visible. Mukhórty, buried up to his belly in snow, with the breeching and drugget hanging down, stood all white, his dead head pressed against his frozen throat: icicles hung from his nostrils, his eyes were covered with hoarfrost as though filled with tears, and he had grown so thin in that one night that he was nothing but skin and bone.

Vasíli Andréevich was stiff as a frozen carcass, and when they rolled him off Nikíta his legs remained apart and his arms stretched out as they had been. His bulging hawk eyes were frozen, and his open mouth under his clipped moustache was full of snow. But Nikíta though chilled through was still alive. When he had been brought to, he felt sure that he was already dead and that what was taking place with him was no longer happening in this world but in the next. When he heard the peasants shouting as they dug him out and rolled the frozen body of Vasíli Andréevich from off him, he was at first surprised that

in the other world peasants should be shouting in the same old way and had the same kind of body, and then when he realized that he was still in this world he was sorry rather than glad, especially when he found that the toes on both his feet were frozen.

Nikíta lay in hospital for two months. They cut off three of his toes, but the others recovered so that he was still able to work and went on living for another twenty years, first as a farm-labourer, then in his old age as a watchman. He died at home as he had wished, only this year, under the icons with a lighted taper in his hands. Before he died he asked his wife's forgiveness and forgave her for the cooper. He also took leave of his son and grandchildren, and died sincerely glad that he was relieving his son and daughter-in-law of the burden of having to feed him, and that he was now really passing from this life of which he was weary into that other life which every year and every hour grew clearer and more desirable to him. Whether he is better or worse off there where he awoke after his death, whether he was disappointed or found there what he expected, we shall all soon learn.

Hadji Murad

Preface

"I am writing to you specially to say how glad I have been to be your contemporary, and to express my last and sincere request. My friend, return to literary activity! That gift came to you from whence comes all the rest. … Great writer of our Russian land, listen to my wish!"

So wrote Turgenev on his deathbed to Tolstoy, when the latter, absorbed in religious struggles and studies, had for five years produced no work of art save one short story.

Nor was it long before the wish was realised, for three years later Tolstoy was writing *The Death of Iván Ilyitch*, and that tremendous drama, *The Power of Darkness*; and these were followed by a number of short stories, some plays, a long novel (*Resurrection*) and the works now posthumously published. Among these latter a foremost place belongs to *Hadji Murád*, in which Tolstoy again tells of that Caucasian life which supplied him with the matter for some of his earliest tales as well as for his great story *The Cossacks*, which Turgenev declared to be "the best story that has been written in our (Russian) language."

The Caucasus indeed offered a rich variety of material on which

Tolstoy drew at every stage of his literary career. It was there that, at the age of twenty-three, he first saw war as a volunteer; there he served for two years as a cadet; and there finally he became an officer, before leaving to serve in the Crimean war—which in its turn gave him material for his sketches of *Sevastopol*.

In his letters from the Caucasus he often complained of the dullness and emptiness of his life there; yet it certainly attracted him for a while, and was not devoid of stirring and curious incidents.

The most extraordinary of these relates to a gambling debt he incurred and was unable to pay. Having given notes-of-hand, he was in despair when the date of payment approached without his having been able to procure the money needed, and he prayed earnestly to God "to get me out of this disagreeable scrape."

The very next morning he received a letter enclosing his notes-of-hand, which were returned to him as a free gift by a young Chechen named Sado, who had become his *kunák* (devoted friend) and had won them back at cards from the officer who won them from Tolstoy.

It was in company with that same Sado that Tolstoy, when passing from one fort to another, was chased by the enemy and nearly captured.

His life was in imminent danger on another occasion, when a shell, fired by the enemy, smashed the carriage of a cannon he was pointing; but once again he escaped unhurt.

It was during his first year in the Caucasus that Tolstoy began writing for publication. "The Raid," describing the kind of warfare he was witnessing there, was the second of his stories to appear in print. A little later he wrote two other tales dealing with the same subject: "The Wood-Felling," and "Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance in the Detachment."

Feeling that he had not exhausted the material at his disposal, he then planned "The Cossacks: a Caucasian Story of 1852," which he kept on hand unfinished for nearly ten years, and might not have published even then had he not happened to lose some money at Chinese billiards to a stranger he met at the club in Moscow. To pay this debt, he sold "The Cossacks" for Rs. 1,000 (about £150 in those days) to Katkóv, the well-known publicist and publisher, with whom he subsequently quarrelled. The circumstances under which he had parted with "The Cossacks" were so unpleasant to Tolstoy that he never completed the story.

Ten years later, when he had set his heart on producing an attractive reading-book for children, he wrote the charming little story "A Prisoner in the Caucasus" (one of the gems in *Twenty-Three Tales*),

founded on the above-mentioned incident of his own narrow escape from capture; and finally, after another thirty years had passed, he drew upon his Caucasian recollections for the last time when he composed *Hadji Murád*.

Tolstoy had met Hadji Murád in Tiflis in December 1851,[39] and in a letter addressed to his brother Sergius on the 23rd of that month he wrote—

> "If you wish to show off with news from the Caucasus, you may recount that a certain Hadji Murád (second in importance to Shamil himself) surrendered a few days ago to the Russian Government. He was the leading daredevil and 'brave' of all Chechnya, but has been led into committing a mean action."

The details of Hadji Murád's life as given by Tolstoy in his story are not always historically exact; but the main events are true, and the tale is told in a way that gives a vivid and faithful picture of those stirring times.

Of the struggle for independence carried on in the Caucasus with such desperate bravery for so many years, very little was known to English readers until the publication of Mr. Baddeley's *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, which gives an excellent account of that involved, confusing and long drawn-out, but important, contest.

The Caucasus is peopled by so many tribes, differing so much among themselves, and all so strange to Western Europeans, that it is not easy to summarise the history of the conflict in a way at once correct and clear. There are, however, certain main facts which should be borne in mind when reading *Hadji Murád*.

As her only possible way of escape from the oppression of Persia on one side and of Turkey on another, Christian Georgia—lying to the south of the Caucasian Mountains—submitted to Russia as long ago as the commencement of the nineteenth century.

Even before that Russia had spasmodically attempted to conquer the northern part of the Caucasus; but from then onwards she had a special incentive to press forward and annex the territories dividing her from Georgia which was already hers.

[39] Writing my *Life of Tolstoy* before I knew the full story of Hadji Murád, I confused him, in the first edition, with someone else, and stated that Tolstoy met him at Karalýk in 1871. On reading my book the Countess Tolstoy warned me of this mistake, but her warning did not reach me soon enough, and I was only able to put the matter right in a later edition.

The internecine feuds of the native tribes generally prevented them from offering a united resistance to Russian aggression; but the dense forests of Chechnya, and the exceedingly mountainous character of Daghestan, rendered the subjugation of those regions a matter of great difficulty.

In addition to the geographical obstacles there was another, due to a strong religious revival which sprang up among the Mohammedan population and, despite the feuds among the tribes, to a considerable extent and for a considerable time united them in a holy war against the infidel Russians.

Like all great religious movements this revival had roots in a distant past. It also had currents, religious and political, which swept now in one direction and now in another.

To begin with, there was a *Murid* movement which appears to have been almost identical with Sufi'ism, and to have existed from the third century of the Mohammedan era. That movement, going beyond the Shariát (the written law), inculcated the Tarikát (the Path) leading to the higher life. It also proclaimed the equality of all Mussulmans, rich and poor alike, and enjoined temperance, abstinence, self-denial, and the renunciation of the good things of both worlds, that man may make himself "free to receive worthily the love towards God." In Muridism a teacher was called a *Murshíd* ("one who shows" the way), while a *Murid* was a disciple or follower ("one who desires" to find the way).

Such was Muridism for several centuries: a peaceful, religious movement of a highly spiritual character; but within the last few generations the struggle against Russia had given a new quality to the movement, and from being spiritual it had become strongly political.

As early as 1785 Mansúr, a leader of unknown origin, appeared in the Caucasus preaching the *Ghazavát*, or Holy War, against the infidels; and from 1830 onwards, when Kazi-Mullá, the first Imam (uniting in himself supreme spiritual and temporal power) took the field, Muridism became identified with the fierce struggle for independence carried on by the native tribes against the Russian invaders.

Mansúr and Kazi-Mullá are both mentioned in Tolstoy's story, in which also Hadji Murád tells of the part he took in the execution or assassination of Kazi-Mullá's successor, Hamzád. Shamil, too, who succeeded Hamzád and was the greatest of the Imams, figures as one of the principal characters in the story.

How little the nature and importance of that war in the Caucasus was understood by Western Europe is shown by the fact that when the Crimean War broke out—the year after Hadji Murád's death—no seri-

ous attempt was made to support or encourage Shamil in the struggle which, even after the conclusion of the Crimean War, he desperately maintained against Russia till his last fortress fell in 1859, and he himself was sent prisoner to Kaluga.

We may be said to owe the existence of this story to the severe illnesses from which Tolstoy suffered in 1901 and 1902, for his sickness kept him in a state in which he found it difficult to work at "What is Religion?" or the other didactic essays he was engaged upon, and by way of relaxation he turned to fiction and produced *Hadji Murád*. It is worth noticing that in the fifth chapter of this—one of the last stories he ever wrote—Tolstoy describes a skirmish and a soldier's death in a way that closely reminds one of an incident he had handled in "The Wood Felling," nearly half a century before. He thus, at the outset and at the close of his literary career, told almost the same tale in almost the same way and with almost the same feeling.

On comparing the Caucasian stories he wrote between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-four with the one he wrote when he was seventy-four, one finds in them all the same wonderfully acute power of observation which seized the characteristic indications both of the inner and the outer life of man; the same retentive memory; the same keen interest in life, and the same discrimination between things sympathised with and things disapproved of, but there is this very noticeable difference: each of the earlier stories contains a character who more or less closely represents Tolstoy himself, through whose eyes everything is seen. *Hadji Murád*, on the contrary, is written quite objectively. Before he wrote it Tolstoy had become sure of himself, and felt that he had only to tell the story, and that his judgment of men and of actions would justify itself without his own point of view even needing to be explicitly stated.

In *Hadji Murád*, as in all his later writings, Tolstoy makes us feel how repugnant to him were the customary ways of the life we call "civilised," with its selfishness and self-indulgence, its officialism, banquets, balls, and masquerades, and above all, with its complete lack of spiritual fervour. The manners and customs of the semi-savage tribesmen arouse no such abhorrence in him. The natural instinctive spontaneity of their conduct appeals to him; and throughout the tale he makes us feel that Hadji Murád could not possibly have acted otherwise than as he did, either when he deserted the Russians or when he returned to them, or when he slew his guards and tried once more to escape to the mountains. Hadji Murád held life cheap—his own as well as that of other people; but though he spilt much blood, he never

arouses the antipathy we are made to feel for the pedantic, stupid cruelty of Nicholas I.

Especially attractive to Tolstoy is the religious fervour of self-abnegation, and the readiness for self-sacrifice in a great cause, which were so frequently shown by the mountaineers.

We are more closely akin to the men of other lands than we often realise; and lest someone reading this book should say to himself, "Yes, the Russians are so-and-so, but we are not as they …" it may be well to mention that the elder Vorontsóv's mother was an Englishwoman, a Herbert of the Pembroke family. For that fact, and for much else, I am indebted to Mr. J. F. Baddeley, and especially for his version of the song of the blood-feud sung by Khanéfii, which I have borrowed.

The footnotes are not part of the original work, but belong to the translation.

I

I was returning home by the fields. It was midsummer; the hay harvest was over, and they were just beginning to reap the rye. At that season of the year there is a delightful variety of flowers—red, white, and pink scented tufty clover; milk-white ox-eye daisies with their bright yellow centers and pleasant spicy smell; yellow honey-scented rape blossoms; tall campanulas with white and lilac bells, tulip-shaped; creeping vetch; yellow, red, and pink scabious; plantains with faintly-scented, neatly-arranged purple, slightly pink-tinged blossoms; cornflowers, bright blue in the sunshine and when still young, but growing paler and redder towards evening or when growing old; and delicate quickly-withering almond-scented dodder flowers. I gathered a large nosegay of these different flowers, and was going home, when I noticed in a ditch, in full bloom, a beautiful thistle plant of the crimson kind, which in our neighborhood they call "Tartar" and carefully avoid when mowing—or, if they do happen to cut it down, throw out from among the grass for fear of pricking their hands. Thinking to pick this thistle and put it in the center of my nosegay, I climbed down into the ditch, and, after driving away a velvety bumblebee that had penetrated deep into one of the flowers and had there fallen sweetly asleep, I set to work to pluck the flower. But this proved a very difficult task. Not only did the stalk prick on every side—even through the handkerchief I wrapped round my hand—but it was so tough that I had to struggle with it for nearly five minutes, breaking the fibers one by one; and when I

had at last plucked it, the stalk was all frayed and the flower itself no longer seemed so fresh and beautiful. Moreover, owing to a coarseness and stiffness, it did not seem in place among the delicate blossoms of my nosegay. I felt sorry to have vainly destroyed a flower that looked beautiful in its proper place, and I threw it away.

"But what energy and tenacity! With what determination it defended itself, and how dearly it sold its life!" thought I to myself, recollecting the effort it had cost me to pluck the flower. The way home led across black-earth fields that had just been ploughed up. I ascended the dusty path. The ploughed field belonged to a landed proprietor, and was so large that on both sides and before me to the top of the hill nothing was visible but evenly furrowed and moist earth. The land was well tilled, and nowhere was there a blade of grass or any kind of plant to be seen; it was all black. "Ah, what a destructive creature is man. … How many different plant-lives he destroys to support his own existence!" thought I, involuntarily looking around for some living thing in this lifeless black field. In front of me to the right of the road I saw some kind of little clump, and drawing nearer I found it was the same kind of thistle as that which I had vainly plucked and thrown away. This "Tartar" plant had three branches. One was broken and stuck out like the stump of a mutilated arm. Each of the other two bore a flower, once red but now blackened. One stalk was broken and half of it hung down with a soiled flower at its tip. The other, though also soiled with black mud, still stood erect. Evidently a cartwheel had passed over the plant, but it had risen again, and that was why, though erect, it stood twisted to one side, as if a piece of its body had been torn from it, its bowels drawn out, an arm torn off, and one of its eyes plucked out; and yet it stood firm and did not surrender to man, who had destroyed all its brothers around it. …

"What energy!" I thought. "Man has conquered everything, and destroyed millions of plants, yet this one won't submit." And I remembered a Caucasian episode of years ago, which I had partly seen myself, partly heard of from eyewitnesses, and in part imagined.

The episode, as it has taken shape in my memory and imagination, was as follows.

It happened towards the end of 1851.

On a cold November evening Hadji Murád rode into Makhmet, a hostile Chechen *aoul*,[40] that was filled with the scented smoke of burning *kizyák*,[41] and that lay some fifteen miles from Russian territory.

[40] *Aoul*: Tartar village.

The strained chant of the muezzin had just ceased, and though the clear mountain air, impregnated with *kizyák* smoke, above the lowing of the cattle and the bleating of the sheep that were dispersing among the *sáklyas*[42] (which were crowded together like the cells of honeycomb), could be clearly heard the guttural voices of disputing men, and sounds of women's and children's voices rising from near the fountain below.

This Hadji Murád was Shamil's *naïb*,[43] famous for his exploits, who used never to ride out without his banner, and was always accompanied by some dozens of *murids*, who caracoled and showed off before him. Now, with one *murid* only, wrapped in a hood and burka,[44] from under which protruded a rifle, he rode, a fugitive, trying to attract as little attention as possible and peering with his quick black eyes into the faces of those he met on his way.

When he entered the *aoul*, Hadji Murád did not ride up the road leading to the open square, but turned to the left into a narrow side street; and on reaching the second *sáklya*, which was cut into the hillside, he stopped and looked round. There was no one under the penthouse in front; but on the roof of the *sáklya* itself, behind the freshly plastered clay chimney, lay a man covered with a sheepskin. Hadji Murád touched him with the handle of his leather-plaited whip, and clicked his tongue. An old man rose from under the sheepskin. He had on a greasy old *beshmét*[45] and a nightcap. His moist red eyelids had no lashes, and he blinked to get them unstuck. Hadji Murád, repeating the customary "*Selaam aleikum!*" uncovered his face. "*Aleikum, selaam!*" said the old man, recognizing him, and smiling with his toothless mouth; and raising himself on his thin legs he began thrusting his feet into the wooden-heeled slippers that stood by the chimney. Then he leisurely slipped his arms into the sleeves of his crumpled sheepskin, and going to the ladder that leant against the roof, he descended backwards. While he dressed, and as he climbed down, he kept shaking his head on its thin, shrivelled sunburnt neck, and mumbling something with his toothless mouth. As soon as he reached the ground he hospitably seized Hadji Murád's bridle and right stirrup; but the strong, active *murid* had quickly dismounted and, motioning the old man aside, took his place. Hadji Murád also dismounted and, walking with a slight limp, entered under the penthouse. A boy of fifteen,

[41] *Kizyák*: fuel made of straw and manure.
[42] *Sáklya*: a Caucasian house, clay-plastered and often built of earth.
[43] *Naïb*: lieutenant or governor.
[44] Burka: a long, round felt cape.
[45] *Beshmét*: a Tartar undergarment with sleeves.

coming quickly out of the door, met him and wonderingly fixed his sparkling eyes, black as ripe sloes, on the new arrivals.

"Run to the mosque and call your father," ordered the old man, as he hurried forward to open the thin, creaking door into the *sáklya* for Hadji Murád.

As Hadji Murád entered the outer door, a slight, spare, middle-aged woman in a yellow smock, red *beshmét*, and wide blue trousers came through an inner door carrying cushions.

"May thy coming bring happiness!" said she, and, bending nearly double, began arranging the cushions along the front wall for the guest to sit on.

"May thy sons live!" answered Hadji Murád, taking off his burka, his rifle, and his sword, and handing them to the old man, who carefully hung the rifle and sword on a nail beside the weapons of the master of the house, which were suspended between two large basins that glittered against the clean clay-plastered and carefully whitewashed wall.

Hadji Murád adjusted the pistol at his back, came up to the cushions and, wrapping his Circassian coat closer round him, sat down. The old man squatted on his bare heels beside him, closed his eyes, and lifted his hands palms upwards. Hadji Murád did the same; then after repeating a prayer they both stroked their faces, passing their hands downwards till the palms joined at the end of their beards.

"*Ne habar?*" ("Is there anything new?") asked Hadji Murád, addressing the old man.

"*Habar yok*" ("Nothing new"), replied the old man, looking with his lifeless red eyes not at Hadji Murád's face but at his breast. "I live at the apiary, and have only today come to see my son. … He knows."

Hadji Murád, understanding that the old man did not wish to say what he knew and what Hadji Murád wanted to know, slightly nodded his head and asked no more questions.

"There is no good news," said the old man. "The only news is that the hares keep discussing how to drive away the eagles; and the eagles tear first one and then another of them. The other day the Russian dogs burnt the hay in the Mitchit *aoul*. … May their faces be torn!" added he, hoarsely and angrily.

Hadji Murád's *murid* entered the room, his strong legs striding softly over the earthen floor. Retaining only his dagger and pistol, he took off his burka, rifle, and sword as Hadji Murád had done, and hung them up on the same nails with his leader's weapons.

"Who is he?" asked the old man, pointing to the newcomer.

"My *murid*. Eldár is his name," said Hadji Murád.

"That is well," said the old man, and motioned Eldár to a place on a piece of felt beside Hadji Murád. Eldár sat down, crossing his legs and fixing his fine ram-like eyes on the old man, who, having now started talking, was telling how their brave fellows had caught two Russian soldiers the week before, and had killed one and sent the other to Shamil in Vedén.

Hadji Murád heard him absently, looking at the door and listening to the sounds outside. Under the penthouse steps were heard, the door creaked, and Sado, the master of the house, came in. He was a man of about forty, with a small beard, long nose, and eyes as black, though not as glittering, as those of his fifteen-year-old son who had run to call him home, and who now entered with his father and sat down by the door. The master of the house took off his wooden slippers at the door, and pushing his old and much-worn cap to the back of his head (which had remained unshaved so long that it was beginning to be overgrown with black hair), at once squatted down in front of Hadji Murád.

He too lifted his palms upwards, as the old man had done, repeated a prayer, and then stroked his face downwards. Only after that did he begin to speak. He told how an order had come from Shamil to seize Hadji Murád, alive or dead; that Shamil's envoys had left only the day before; that the people were afraid to disobey Shamil's orders; and that therefore it was necessary to be careful.

"In my house," said Sado, "no one shall injure my *kunák*[46] while I live, but how will it be in the open fields? … We must think it over."

Hadji Murád listened with attention and nodded approvingly. When Sado had finished he said:

"Very well. Now we must send a man with a letter to the Russians. My *murid* will go, but he will need a guide."

"I will send brother Bata," said Sado. "Go and call Bata," he added, turning to his son.

The boy instantly bounded to his nimble feet as if he were on springs, and swinging his arms, rapidly left the *sáklya*. Some ten minutes later he returned with a sinewy, short-legged Chechen, burnt almost black by the sun, wearing a worn and tattered yellow Circassian coat with frayed sleeves, and crumpled black leggings.

Hadji Murád greeted the newcomer, and at once, and again without wasting a single word, immediately asked:

"Canst thou conduct my *murid* to the Russians?"

[46] *Kunák*: sworn friend, brother by adoption.

"I can," gaily replied Bata. "I can certainly do it. There is not another Chechen who would pass as I can. Another might agree to go and might promise anything, but would do nothing; but I can do it!"

"All right," said Hadji Murád. "Thou wilt receive three for thy trouble," and he held up three fingers.

Bata nodded to show that he understood, and added that it was not money he prized, but that he was ready to serve Hadji Murád for the honor alone. Everyone in the mountains knew Hadji Murád, and how he slew the Russian swine.

"Very well. … A rope should be long but a speech short," said Hadji Murád.

"Well, then, I'll hold my tongue," said Bata.

"Where the river Argun bends by the cliff," said Hadji Murád, "there are two stacks in a glade in the forest—thou knowest?"

"I know."

"There my four horsemen are waiting for me," said Hadji Murád.

"Aye," answered Bata, nodding.

"Ask for Khan Mahomá. He knows what to do and what to say. Canst thou lead him to the Russian Commander, Prince Vorontsóv?"

"Yes, I'll take him."

"Canst thou take him and bring him back again?"

"I can."

"Then take him there, and return to the wood. I shall be there too."

"I will do it all," said Bata, rising, and putting his hands on his heart he went out.

Hadji Murád turned to his host.

"A man must also be sent to Chekhi," he began, and took hold of one of the cartridge pouches of his Circassian coat, but let his hand drop immediately and became silent on seeing two women enter the *sáklya*.

One was Sado's wife—the thin middle-aged woman who had arranged the cushions. The other was quite a young girl, wearing red trousers and a green *beshmét*; a necklace of silver coins covered the whole front of her dress, and at the end of the short but thick plait of hard black hair that hung between her thin shoulder-blades a silver ruble was suspended. Her eyes, as sloe-black as those of her father and brother, sparkled brightly in her young face, which tried to be stern. She did not look at the visitors, but evidently felt their presence.

Sado's wife brought in a low round table, on which stood tea, pancakes in butter, cheese, *churek* (that is, thinly rolled out bread), and

honey. The girl carried a basin, a ewer, and a towel.

Sado and Hadji Murád kept silent as long as the women, with their coin ornaments tinkling, moved softly about in their red soft-soled slippers, setting out before the visitors the things they had brought. Eldár sat motionless as a statue, his ram-like eyes fixed on his crossed legs, all the time the women were in the *sáklya*. Only after they had gone, and their soft footsteps could no longer be heard behind the door, did he give a sigh of relief.

Hadji Murád having pulled out a bullet from one of the cartridge-pouches of his Circassian coat, and having taken out a rolled-up note that lay beneath it, held it out, saying:

"To be handed to my son."

"Where must the answer be sent?"

"To thee, and thou must forward it to me."

"It shall be done," said Sado, and placed the note in the cartridge-pocket of his own coat. Then he took up the metal ewer and moved the basin towards Hadji Murád.

Hadji Murád turned up the sleeves of his *beshmét* on his white muscular arms, held out his hands under the clear cold water which Sado poured from the ewer. Having wiped them on a clean unbleached towel, Hadji Murád turned to the table. Eldár did the same. While the visitors ate, Sado sat opposite, and thanked them several times for their visit. The boy sat by the door, never taking his sparkling eyes off Hadji Murád's face, and smiled as if in confirmation of his father's words.

Though Hadji Murád had eaten nothing for more than twenty-four hours he ate only a little bread and cheese; then, drawing out a small knife from under his dagger, he spread some honey on a piece of bread.

"Our honey is good," said the old man, evidently pleased to see Hadji Murád eating his honey. "This year, above all other years, it is plentiful and good."

"I thank thee," said Hadji Murád and turned from the table. Eldár would have liked to go on eating, but he followed his leader's example, and having moved away from the table, handed him the ewer and basin.

Sado knew that he was risking his life by receiving such a guest in his house, for after his quarrel with Shamil, the latter had issued a proclamation to all the inhabitants of Chechnya forbidding them to receive Hadji Murád on pain of death. He knew that the inhabitants of the *aoul* might at any moment become aware of Hadji Murád's presence in his house and might demand his surrender; but this not only did not

frighten Sado, it even gave him pleasure. He considered it his duty to protect his guest though it should cost him his life, and he was proud and pleased with himself because he was doing his duty.

"Whilst thou are in my house and my head is on my shoulders no one shall harm thee," he repeated to Hadji Murád.

Hadji Murád looked into his glittering eyes, and understanding that this was true, said with some solemnity—

"Mayst thou receive joy and life!"

Sado silently laid his hand on his heart in token of thanks for these kind words.

Having closed the shutters of the *sáklya* and laid some sticks in the fireplace, Sado, in an exceptionally bright and animated mood, left the room and went into that part of his *sáklya* where his family all lived. The women had not yet gone to sleep, and were talking about the dangerous visitors who were spending the night in their guest-chambers.

II

At the advanced fort Vozvízhensk, situated some ten miles from the *aoul* in which Hadji Murád was spending the night, three soldiers and a noncommissioned officer left the fortifications and went beyond the Shahgirínsk Gate. The soldiers, dressed as Caucasian soldiers used to be in those days, wore sheepskin coats and caps, and boots that reached above their knees, and they carried their cloaks tightly rolled up and fastened across their shoulders. Shouldering arms, they first went some five hundred paces along the road, and then turned off it and went some twenty paces to the right—the dead leaves rustling under their boots—till they reached the blackened trunk of a broken plane tree, just visible through the darkness. There they stopped. It was at this plane tree that an ambush party was usually placed.

The bright stars, that had seemed to be running along the tree tops while the soldiers were walking through the forest, now stood still, shining brightly between the bare branches of the trees.

"A good job it's dry," said the noncommissioned officer, Panóv, bringing down his long gun and bayonet with a clang from his shoulder, and placing it against the plane tree. The three soldiers did the same.

"Sure enough, I've lost it!" muttered Panóv crossly. "Must have left it behind, or I've dropped it on the way."

"What are you looking for?" asked one of the soldiers in a bright,

cheerful voice.

"The bowl of my pipe. Where the devil has it got to?"

"Have you got the stem?" asked the cheerful voice.

"Here the stem."

"Then why not stick it straight into the ground?"

"Not worth bothering!"

"We'll manage that in a minute."

It was forbidden to smoke while in ambush, but this ambush hardly deserved the name. It was rather an outpost to prevent the mountaineers from bringing up a cannon unobserved and firing at the fort as they used to. Panóv did not consider it necessary to forego the pleasure of smoking, and therefore accepted the cheerful soldier's offer. The latter took a knife from his pocket and made a small round hole in the ground. Having smoothed this round, he adjusted the pipe stem to it, then filled the hole with tobacco and pressed it down; and the pipe was ready. A sulphur match flared and for a moment lit up the broad-cheeked face of the soldier who lay on his stomach. The air whistled in the stem, and Panóv smelt the pleasant odor of burning tobacco.

"Fixed it up?" said he, rising to his feet.

"Why, of course!"

"What a smart chap you are, Avdéev! … As wise as a judge! Now then, lad."

Avdéev rolled over on his side to make room for Panóv, letting smoke escape from his mouth.

Panóv lay down prone, and after wiping the mouthpiece with his sleeve, began to inhale.

When they had had their smoke the soldiers began to talk.

"They say the commander has had his fingers in the cashbox again," remarked one of them in a lazy voice. "He lost at cards, you see."

"He'll pay it back again," said Panóv.

"Of course he will! He's a good officer," assented Avdéev.

"Good! good!" gloomily repeated the man who had started the conversation. "In my opinion the company ought to speak to him. 'If you've taken the money, tell us how much and when you'll repay it.' "

"That will be as the company decides," said Panóv, tearing himself away from the pipe.

"Of course. 'The community is a strong man,' " assented Avdéev, quoting a proverb.

"There will be oats to buy and boots to get towards spring. The money will be wanted, and what shall we do if he's pocketed it?" in-

sisted the dissatisfied one.

"I tell you it will be as the company wishes," repeated Panóv. "It's not the first time; he takes it and gives it back."

In the Caucasus in those days each company chose men to manage its own commissariat. They received 6 rubles 50 kopeks[47] a month per man from the treasury, and catered for the company. They planted cabbages, made hay, had their own carts, and prided themselves on their well-fed horses. The company's money was kept in a chest, of which the commander had the key; and it often happened that he borrowed from the chest. This had just happened again, and that was what the soldiers were talking about. The morose soldier, Nikítin, wished to demand an account from the commander, while Panóv and Avdéev considered that unnecessary.

After Panóv, Nikítin had a smoke; and then spreading his cloak on the ground, sat down on it, leaning against the trunk of the plane tree. The soldiers were silent. Only far above their heads the crowns of the trees rustled in the wind. Suddenly, above this incessant low rustling, rose the howling, whining, weeping, and chuckling of jackals.

"Just listen to those accursed creatures—how they caterwaul!"

"They're laughing at you because your mug's all on one side," remarked the high voice of the third soldier, an Ukrainian.

All was silent again; only the wind swayed the branches, now revealing and now hiding the stars.

"I say, Panóv," suddenly asked the cheerful Avdéev, "do you ever feel dull?"

"Dull, why?" replied Panóv reluctantly.

"Well, I do feel dull … so dull sometimes that I don't know what I might not be ready to do to myself."

"There now!" was all Panóv replied.

"That time when I drank all the money, it was from dullness. It took hold of me … took hold of me till I thought to myself, 'I'll just get blind drunk!' "

"But sometimes drinking makes it still worse."

"Yes, that's happened to me too. But what is a man to do with himself?"

"But what makes you feel so dull?"

"What, me? … Why, it's the longing for home."

"Is yours a wealthy home then?"

"No, we weren't wealthy, but things went properly—we lived well."

[47] About £1, for at that time the ruble was worth about three shillings. —*A. M.*

And Avdéev began to relate what he had already told Panóv many times.

"You see, I went as a soldier of my own free will, instead of my brother," he said. "He has children. They were five in family and I had only just married. Mother began begging me to go. So I thought, 'Well, maybe they will remember what I've done.' So I went to our proprietor … he was a good master, and he said, 'You're a fine fellow, go!' So I went instead of my brother."

"Well, that was right," said Panóv.

"And yet, will you believe me, Panóv, if I now feel so dull, it's chiefly because of that? 'Why did you go instead of your brother?' I say to myself. 'He's living like a king now over there, while I have to suffer here;' and the more I think of it the worse I feel. … It seems just a piece of ill-luck!"

Avdéev was silent.

"Perhaps we'd better have another smoke," said he after a pause.

"Well then, fix it up!"

But the soldiers were not to have their smoke. Hardly had Avdéev risen to fix the pipe stem in its place when above the rustling of the trees they heard footsteps along the road. Panóv took his gun and pushed Nikítin with his foot.

Nikítin rose and picked up his cloak.

The third soldier, Bondarénko, rose also, and said:

"And I have dreamt such a dream, mates. …"

"*Sh!*" said Avdéev, and the soldiers held their breath, listening. The footsteps of men in soft-soled boots were heard approaching. Clearer and clearer through the darkness was heard a rustling of the fallen leaves and dry twigs. Then came the peculiar guttural tones of Chechen voices. The soldiers now not only heard, but saw two shadows passing through a clear space between the trees. One shadow taller than the other. When these shadows had come in line with the soldiers, Panóv, gun in hand, stepped out on to the road, followed by his comrades.

"Who goes there?" cried he.

"Me, friendly Chechen," said the shorter one. This was Bata. "Gun, *yok*![48] … sword, *yok*!" said he, pointing to himself. "Prince, want!"

The taller one stood silent beside his comrade. He, too, was unarmed.

"He means he's a scout, and wants the Colonel," explained Panóv

[48] *Yok*: no, not.

to his comrades.

"Prince Vorontsóv … much want! Big business!" said Bata.

"All right, all right! We'll take you to him," said Panóv. "I say, you'd better take them," said he to Avdéev, "you and Bondarénko; and when you've given them up to the officer on duty come back again. Mind," he added, "be careful to make them keep in front of you!"

"And what of this?" said Avdéev, moving his gun and bayonet as though stabbing someone. "I'd just give a dig, and let the steam out of him!"

"What'll he be worth when you've stuck him?" remarked Bondarénko.

"Now, march!"

When the steps of the two soldiers conducting the scouts could no longer be heard, Panóv and Nikítin returned to their post.

"What the devil brings them here at night?" said Nikítin.

"Seems it's necessary," said Panóv. "But it's getting chilly," he added, and, unrolling his cloak, he put it on and sat down by the tree.

About two hours later Avdéev and Bondarénko returned.

"Well, have you handed them over?"

"Yes. They weren't yet asleep at the Colonel's—they were taken straight in to him. And do you know, mates, those shaven-headed lads are fine!" continued Avdéev. "Yes, really. What a talk I had with them!"

"Of course you'd talk," remarked Nikítin disapprovingly.

"Really they're just like Russians. One of them is married. 'Molly,' says I, '*bar*?'[49] '*Bar*,' he says. Bondarénko, didn't I say '*bar*'? 'Many *bar*?' 'A couple,' says he. A couple! Such a good talk we had! Such nice fellows!"

"Nice, indeed!" said Nikítin. "If you met him alone he'd soon let the guts out of you."

"It will be getting light before long," said Panóv.

"Yes, the stars are beginning to go out," said Avdéev, sitting down and making himself comfortable.

And the soldiers were silent again.

[49] *Bar*: have.

III

The windows of the barracks and the soldiers' houses had long been dark in the fort; but there were still lights in the windows of the best house.

In it lived Prince Simon Mikhailovich Vorontsóv, Commander of the Kurín Regiment, an imperial aide-de-camp, and son of the Commander-in-Chief. Vorontsóv lived with his wife, Márya Vasílevna, a famous Petersburg beauty, and lived in this little Caucasian fort more luxuriously than anyone had ever lived there before. To Vorontsóv, and especially to his wife, it seemed that they were not only living a very modest life, but one full of privations; while to the inhabitants of the place their luxury was surprising and extraordinary.

Now at midnight, in the spacious drawing room with its carpeted floor, its rich curtains drawn across the windows, at a card table lit by four candles, sat the hosts and their visitors, playing cards. One of the players was Vorontsóv himself: a long-faced, fair-haired colonel, wearing the insignia and gold cords of an aide-de-camp. His partner—a graduate of Petersburg University, whom the Princess Vorontsóv had lately had sent to the Caucasus to be tutor to her little son (born of her first marriage)—was a shaggy young man of gloomy appearance. Against them played two officers: one a broad and red-faced man, Poltorátsky, a company commander who had exchanged out of the Guards; and the other, the regimental adjutant, a man with a cold expression on his handsome face, who sat very straight on his chair.

The Princess, Márya Vasílevna, a large-built, large-eyed, and black-browed beauty, sat beside Poltorátsky—her crinoline touching his legs—and looked over his cards. In her words, her looks, her smile, her perfume, and in every movement of her body, there was something that reduced Poltorátsky to obliviousness of everything except the consciousness of her nearness; and he made blunder after blunder, trying his partner's temper more and more.

"No … that's too bad! You've wasted an ace again," said the regimental adjutant, flushing all over as Poltorátsky threw out an ace.

Poltorátsky uncomprehendingly—as though just awoke—turned his kindly, wide-set black eyes towards the dissatisfied adjutant.

"Do forgive him!" said Márya Vasílevna, smiling. "There, you see! Didn't I tell you so?" she went on, turning to Poltorátsky.

"But that's not at all what you said," replied Poltorátsky, smiling.

"Wasn't it?" she queried, also smiling; and this answering smile excited and delighted Poltorátsky to such a degree that he blushed

crimson, and seeing the cards began to shuffle.

"It isn't your turn to deal," said the adjutant sternly, and with his white ringed hand he began to deal as though he wished to get rid of the cards as quickly as possible.

The Prince's valet entered the drawing room and announced that the officer on duty wanted the Prince.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said the Prince, speaking Russian with an English accent. "Will you take my place, Márya?"

"Do you all agree?" asked the Princess, rising quickly and lightly to her full height, rustling her silks, and smiling the radiant smile of a happy woman.

"I always agree to everything," replied the adjutant, very pleased that the Princess—who could not play at all—was now going to play against him.

Poltorátsky only spread out his hands and smiled.

The rubber was nearly finished when the Prince returned to the drawing room, animated and obviously very pleased.

"Do you know what I propose?"

"What?"

"That we have some champagne."

"I am always ready for that," said Poltorátsky.

"Why not? We shall be delighted!" said the adjutant.

"Bring some, Vasíly!" said the Prince.

"What did they want you for?" asked Márya Vasílevna.

"It was the officer on duty and another man."

"Who? What about?" asked Márya Vasílevna quickly.

"I mustn't say," said Vorontsóv, shrugging his shoulders.

"You mustn't say!" repeated Márya Vasílevna. "We'll see about that."

When the champagne was brought, each of the visitors drank a glass; and, having finished the game and settled the scores, they began to take their leave.

"Is it your company that's ordered to the forest tomorrow?" the Prince asked Poltorátsky as they said goodbye.

"Yes, mine … why?"

"Then we'll meet tomorrow," said the Prince, smiling slightly.

"Very pleased," replied Poltorátsky, not quite understanding what Vorontsóv was saying to him, and preoccupied only by the thought that he would in a minute be pressing Márya Vasílevna's hand.

Márya Vasílevna, according to her wont, not only pressed his hand firmly but shook it vigorously; and again reminding him of his mistake

in playing diamonds, she gave him what he took to be a delightful, affectionate, and meaning smile.

Poltorátsky went home in an ecstatic condition only to be understood by people like himself who, having grown up and been educated in society, meet a woman belonging to their own circle after months of isolated military life, and, moreover, a woman like Princess Vorontsóv.

When he reached the little house in which he and his comrade lived he pushed the door, but it was locked. He knocked, but still the door was not opened. He felt vexed, and began kicking the door and banging it with his sword. Then he heard a sound of footsteps and Vovílo—a domestic serf of his—undid the cabin-hook which fastened the door.

"What do you mean by locking yourself in, blockhead?"

"But how is it possible, sir … ?"

"You're tipsy again! I'll show you 'how it is possible!' " and Poltorátsky was about to strike Vovílo but changed his mind. "Oh, go to the devil! … Light a candle."

"In a minute."

Vovílo was really tipsy. He had been drinking at the name-day party of the ordnance sergeant, Iván Petróvich. On returning home he began comparing his life with that of the latter. Iván Petróvich had a salary, was married, and hoped in a year's time to get his discharge.

Vovílo had been taken "up" when a boy—that is, he had been taken into his owner's household service—and now although he was already over forty he was not married, but lived a campaigning life with his harum-scarum young master. He was a good master, who seldom struck him, but what kind of a life was it? "He promised to free me when we return from the Caucasus, but where am I to go with my freedom? … It's a dog's life!" thought Vovílo, and he felt so sleepy that, afraid lest someone should come in and steal something, he fastened the hook of the door and fell asleep.

Poltorátsky entered the bedroom, which he shared with his comrade Tíkhonov.

"Well, have you lost?" asked Tíkhonov, waking up.

"No, as it happens, I haven't. I've won seventeen rubles, and we drank a bottle of Cliquot!"

"And you've looked at Márya Vasílevna?"

"Yes, and I have looked at Márya Vasílevna," repeated Poltorátsky.

"It will soon be time to get up," said Tíkhonov. "We are to start at six."

"Vovílo!" shouted Poltorátsky, "see that you wake me up properly tomorrow at five!"

"How can I wake you, if you fight?"

"I tell you you're to wake me! Do you hear?"

"All right." Vovílo went out, taking Poltorátsky's boots and clothes with him. Poltorátsky got into bed and, and smiling, smoked a cigarette and put out his candle. In the dark he saw before him the smiling face of Márya Vasílevna.

The Vorontsóvs did not go to bed at once. When the visitors had left, Márya Vasílevna went up to her husband, and standing in front of him, said severely—

"*Eh bien! vous allez me dire ce que c'est.*"[50]

"*Mais, ma chère …*"

"*Pas de 'ma chère'! C'était un émissaire, n'est-ce pas?*"

"*Quand même, je ne puis pas vous le dire.*"

"*Vous ne pouvez pas? Alors, c'est moi qui vais vous le dire!*"

"*Vous?*"

"It was Hadji Murád, wasn't it?" said Márya Vasílevna, who had for some days past heard of the negotiations and thought that Hadji Murád himself had been to see her husband. Vorontsóv could not altogether deny this, but disappointed her by saying that it was not Hadji Murád himself but only an emissary to announce that Hadji Murád would come to meet him next day, at the spot where a wood-cutting expedition had been arranged.

In the monotonous life of the fortress, the young Vorontsóvs—both husband and wife—were glad of this occurrence; and when, after speaking of the pleasure the news would give his father, they went to bed, it was already past two o'clock.

IV

After the three sleepless nights he had passed flying from the *murids* Shamil had sent to capture him, Hadji Murád fell asleep as soon as Sado, having bid him goodnight, had gone out of the *sáklya.* He slept fully dressed, with his head on his hand, his elbow sinking deep into the red down-cushions his host had arranged for him.

At a little distance, by the wall, slept Eldár. He lay on his back, his strong young limbs stretched out so that his high chest, with the black cartridge-pouches sewn into the front of his white Circassian coat, was

[50] "Well now! You're going to tell me what it is." "But, my dear …" "Don't 'my dear' me! It was an emissary, wasn't it?" "Supposing it was, still I must not tell you." "You must not? Well then, I will tell you!" "You?"

higher than his freshly shaven, blue-gleaming head, which had rolled off the pillow and was thrown back. His upper lip, on which a little soft down was just appearing, pouted like a child's, now contracting and now expanding, as though he were sipping something. He, like Hadji Murád, slept with pistol and dagger in his belt. The sticks in the grate burnt low, and a nightlight in a niche in the wall gleamed faintly.

In the middle of the night the floor of the guest-chamber creaked, and Hadji Murád immediately rose, putting his hand to his pistol. Sado entered, treading softly on the earthen floor.

"What is it?" asked Hadji Murád, as if he had not been asleep at all.

"We must think," replied Sado, squatting down in front of him. "A woman from her roof saw you arrive, and told her husband, and now the whole *aoul* knows. A neighbor has just been to tell my wife that the Elders have assembled in the mosque and want to detain you."

"I must be off!" said Hadji Murád.

"The horses are saddled," said Sado, quickly leaving the *sáklya*.

"Eldár!" whispered Hadji Murád; and Eldár, hearing his name, and above all his master's voice, leapt to his feet, setting his cap straight.

Hadji Murád donned his weapons and then his burka. Eldár did the same, and they both went silently out of the *sáklya* into the penthouse. The black-eyed boy brought their horses. Hearing the clatter of hoofs on the hard-beaten road, someone stuck his head out of the door of a neighboring *sáklya*, and, lattering with his wooden shoes, a man ran up the hill towards the mosque. There was no moon, but the stars shone brightly in the black sky, so that the outlines of the *sáklya* roofs could be seen in the darkness, and rising above the other buildings, the mosque with its minarets in the upper part of the village. From the mosque came a hum of voices.

Hadji Murád, quickly seizing his gun, placed his foot in the narrow stirrup, and, silently and easily throwing his body across, swung himself onto the high cushion of the saddle.

"May God reward you!" he said, addressing his host, while his right foot felt instinctively for the stirrup, and with his whip he lightly touched the lad who held his horse, as a sign that he should let go. The boy stepped aside; and the horse, as if it knew what it had to do, started at a brisk pace down the lane towards the principal street. Eldár rode behind him. Sado in his sheepskin followed, almost running, swinging his arms and crossing now to one side and now to the other of the narrow side-street. At the place where the streets met, first one

moving shadow and then another appeared in the road.

"Stop … who's that? Stop!" shouted a voice, and several men blocked the path.

Instead of stopping, Hadji Murád drew his pistol from his belt, and increasing his speed rode straight at those who blocked the way. They separated, and without looking round he started down the road at a swift canter. Eldár followed him at a sharp trot. Two shots cracked behind them and two bullets whistled past without hitting either Hadji Murád or Eldár. Hadji Murád continued riding at the same pace, but having gone some three hundred yards he stopped his slightly panting horse and listened.

In front of him, lower down, gurgled rapidly running water. Behind him, in the *aoul*, cocks crowed, answering one another. Above these sounds he heard behind him the approaching tramp of horses and the voices of several men. Hadji Murád touched his horse and rode on at an even pace. Those behind him galloped and soon overtook him. They were some twenty mounted men, inhabitants of the *aoul*, who had decided to detain Hadji Murád, or a least to make a show of detaining him in order to justify themselves in Shamil's eyes. When they came near enough to be seen in the darkness, Hadji Murád stopped, let go his bridle, and with an accustomed movement of his left hand unbuttoned the cover of his rifle, which he drew forth with his right. Eldár did the same.

"What do you want?" cried Hadji Murád. "Do you wish to take me? … Take me, then!" and he raised his rifle. The men from the *aoul* stopped, and Hadji Murád, rifle in hand, rode down into the ravine. The mounted men followed him, but did not draw any nearer. When Hadji Murád had crossed to the other side of the ravine, the men shouted to him that he should hear what they had to say. In reply he fired his rifle and put his horse to a gallop. When he reined it in his pursuers were no longer within hearing, and the crowing of the cocks could also no longer be heard; only the murmur of the water in the forest sounded more distinctly, and now and then came the cry of an owl. The black wall of the forest appeared quite close. It was in the forest that his *murids* awaited him.

On reaching it Hadji Murád paused, and drawing much air into his lungs, he whistled and then listened silently. The next minute he was answered by a similar whistle from the forest. Hadji Murád turned from the road and entered it. When he had gone about a hundred paces, he saw among the trunks of the trees a bonfire, the shadows of some men sitting round it, and, half lit-up by the firelight, a hobbled

horse which was saddled. Four men were sitting by the fire.

One of them rose quickly, and coming up to Hadji Murád took hold of his bridle and stirrup. This was Hadji Murád's sworn brother, who managed his household affairs for him.

"Put out the fire," said Hadji Murád, dismounting.

The men began scattering the pile and trampling on the burning branches.

"Has Bata been here?" asked Hadji Murád, moving towards a burka that was spread on the ground.

"Yes, he went away long ago, with Khan Mahomá."

"Which way did they go?"

"That way," answered Khanéfi, pointing in the opposite direction to that from which Hadji Murád had come.

"All right," said Hadji Murád, and unslinging his rifle he began to load it. "We must take care—I have been pursued," he said to a man who was putting out the fire.

This was Gamzálo, a Chechen. Gamzálo approached the burka, took up a rifle that lay on it wrapped in its cover, and without a word went to that side of the glade from which Hadji Murád had come.

Eldár, when he had dismounted, took Hadji Murád's horse; and having reined up both horses' heads high, tied them to two trees. Then he shouldered his rifle as Gamzálo had done, and went to the other side of the glade. The bonfire was extinguished, the forest no longer looked as black as before, but in the sky the stars shone, though but faintly.

Lifting his eyes to the stars, and seeing that the Pleiades had already risen halfway up in the sky, Hadji Murád calculated that it must be long past midnight, and that his nightly prayer was long overdue. He asked Khanéfi for a ewer (they always carried one in their packs), and putting on his burka went to the water.

Having taken off his shoes and performed his ablutions, Hadji Murád stepped onto the burka with bare feet, and then squatted down on his calves, and having first placed his fingers in his ears and closed his eyes, he turned to the south and recited the usual prayer.

When he had finished he returned to the place where the saddlebags lay, and sitting down on the burka he leant his elbows on his knees, and bowed his head and fell into deep thought.

Hadji Murád always had great faith in his own fortune. When planning anything he always felt in advance firmly convinced of success, and fate smiled on him. It had been so, with a few rare exceptions, during the whole course of his stormy military life; and so he hoped it would be now. He pictured to himself how—with the army Vorontsóv

would place at his disposal—he would march against Shamil and take him prisoner, and revenge himself on him; and how the Russian Tsar would reward him, and how he would again rule not only over Avaria, but over the whole of Chechnya, which would submit to him. With these thoughts he unwittingly fell asleep.

He dreamt how he and his brave followers rushed at Shamil, with songs and with the cry, "Hadji Murád is coming!" and how they seized him and his wives, and how he heard the wives crying and sobbing. He woke up. The song, "*Lya-il-allysha*," and the cry "Hadji Murád is coming!" and the weeping of Shamil's wives, was the howling, weeping, and laughter of jackals that awoke him. Hadji Murád lifted his head, glanced at the sky which, seen between the trunks of the trees, was already growing light in the east, and inquired after Khan Mahomá of a *murid* who sat at some distance from him. On hearing that Khan Mahomá had not yet returned, Hadji Murád again bowed his head and at once fell asleep.

He was awakened by the merry voice of Khan Mahomá returning from his mission with Bata. Khan Mahomá at once sat down beside Hadji Murád, and told him how the soldiers had met them and had led them to the Prince himself; and how pleased the Prince was, and how he promised to meet them in the morning, where the Russians would be felling trees beyond the Mitchík, in the Shalín glade. Bata interrupted his fellow-envoy to add details of his own.

Hadji Murád asked particularly for the words with which Vorontsóv had answered his offer to go over to the Russians; and Khan Mahomá and Bata replied with one voice that the Prince promised to receive Hadji Murád as a guest, and to act so that it should be well for him.

Then Hadji Murád questioned them about the road, and when Khan Mahomá assured him that he knew the way well and would conduct him straight to the spot, Hadji Murád took out some money and gave Bata the promised three rubles. Then he ordered his men to take out of the saddlebags his gold-ornamented weapons and his turban, and to clean themselves up so as to look well when they arrived among the Russians.

While they cleaned their weapons, harness, and horses, the stars faded away; it became quite light, and an early morning breeze sprang up.

V

Early in the morning, while it was still dark, two companies carrying axes and commanded by Poltorátsky marched six miles beyond the Shagirínsk Gate, and having thrown out a line of sharpshooters, set to work to fell trees as soon as the day broke. Towards eight o'clock the mist which had mingled with the perfumed smoke of the hissing and crackling damp green branches on the bonfires began to rise, and the wood-fellers—who till then had not seen five paces off, but had only heard one another—began to see both the bonfires and the road through the forest, blocked with fallen trees. The sun now appeared like a bright spot in the fog and now again was hidden.

In the glade, some way from the road, Poltorátsky, his subaltern Tíkhonov, two officers of the Third Company, and Baron Freze, an ex-officer of the Guards and a fellow student of Poltorátsky at the Cadet College, who had been reduced to the ranks for fighting a duel, were sitting on drums. Bits of paper that had contained food, cigarette stumps, and empty bottles lay scattered round the drums. The officers had had some vodka, and were now eating, and drinking porter. A drummer was uncorking their third bottle.

Poltorátsky, although he had not had enough sleep, was in that peculiar state of elation and kindly careless gaiety which he always felt when he found himself among his soldiers and with his comrades, where there was a possibility of danger.

The officers were carrying on an animated conversation, the subject of which was the latest news: the death of General Sletpsóv. None of them saw in this death that most important moment of a life—its termination and return to the source when it sprang—but they only saw in it the valour of a gallant officer, who rushed at the mountaineers sword in hand and desperately hacked them.

Though all of them—and especially those who had been in action—knew and could not help knowing that never in those days in the Caucasus, nor in fact anywhere, nor at any time, did such hand-to-hand hacking as is always imagined and described take place (or if hacking with swords and bayonets ever does take place, it is only those who are running away that get hacked), that fiction of hand-to-hand fighting endowed them with the calm pride and cheerfulness with which they say on the drums (some with a jaunty air, others on the contrary in a very modest pose), drank and joked without troubling about death, which might overtake them at any moment as it had overtaken Sleptsóv. And, as if to confirm their expectations, in the midst of their talk, they

heard to the left of the road the pleasant stirring sound of a rifle shot; and a bullet, merrily whistling somewhere in the misty air, flew past and crashed into a tree.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Poltorátsky in a merry voice; "Why, that's at our line. … There now, Kóstya," and he turned to Freze, "now's your chance. Go back to the company. I will lead the whole company to support the cordon, and we'll arrange a battle that will be simply delightful … and then we'll make a report."

Freze jumped to his feet and went at a quick pace towards the smoke-enveloped spot where he had left his company.

Poltorátsky's little Kabardá dapple-bay was brought to him, and he mounted and drew up his company, and led it in the direction whence the shots were fired. The outposts stood on the skirts of the forest, in front of the bare descending slope of a ravine. The wind was blowing in the direction of the forest, and not only was it possible to see the slope of the ravine, but the opposite side of it was also distinctly visible. When Poltorátsky rode up to the line the sun came out from behind the mist, and on the other side of the ravine, by the outskirts of a young forest, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, a few horsemen became visible. These were the Chechens who had pursued Hadji Murád and wanted to see him meet the Russians. One of them fired at the line. Several soldiers fired back. The Chechens retreated and the firing ceased.

But when Poltorátsky and his company came up, he nevertheless gave orders to fire; and scarcely had the word been passed, when along the whole line of sharpshooters started the incessant, merry, stirring rattle of our rifles, accompanied by pretty dissolving cloudlets of smoke. The soldiers, pleased to have some distraction, hastened to load, and fired shot after shot. The Chechens evidently caught the feeling of excitement, and leaping forward one after another, fired a few shots at our men. One of these shots wounded a soldier. It was the same Avdéev who had lain in ambush the night before.

When his comrades approached him he was lying prone, holding his wounded stomach with both hands, and rocking himself with a rhythmic motion, moaned softly. He belonged to Poltorátsky's company, and Poltorátsky, seeing a group of soldiers collected, rode up to them.

"What is it, lad? Been hit?" said Poltorátsky. "Where?"

Avdéev did not answer.

"I was just going to load, your honor, when I heard a click," said a soldier who had been with Avdéev; "and I look, and see he's dropped his gun."

"*Tut, tut, tut!*" Poltorátsky clicked his tongue. "Does it hurt much, Avdéev?"

"It doesn't hurt, but it stops me walking. A drop of vodka now, your honor!"

Some vodka (or rather the spirit drunk by the soldiers in the Caucasus) was found, and Panóv, severely frowning, brought Avdéev a can-lid full. Avdéev tried to drink it, but immediately handed back the lid.

"My soul turns against it," he said. "Drink it yourself."

Panóv drank up the spirit.

Avdéev raised himself, but sank back at once. They spread out a cloak and laid him on it.

"Your honor, the colonel is coming," said the Sergeant-Major to Poltorátsky.

"All right. Then will you see to him?" said Poltorátsky; and flourishing his whip, he rode at a fast trot to meet Vorontsóv.

Vorontsóv was riding his thoroughbred English chestnut gelding, and was accompanied by the adjutant, a Cossack, and a Chechen interpreter.

"What's happening here?" asked Vorontsóv.

"Why, a skirmishing party attacked our advanced line," Poltorátsky answered.

"Come, come—you arranged the whole thing yourself!"

"Oh no, Prince, not I," said Poltorátsky with a smile; "they pushed forward of their own accord."

"I hear a soldier has been wounded?"

"Yes, it's a great pity. He's a good soldier."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously, I believe … in the stomach."

"And do you know where I am going?" Vorontsóv asked.

"I don't."

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"Hadji Murád has surrendered, and we are now going to meet him."

"You don't mean to say so?"

"His envoy came to me yesterday," said Vorontsóv, with difficulty repressing a smile of pleasure. "He will be waiting for me at the Shalín glade in a few minutes. Place sharpshooters as far as the glade, and then come and join me."

"I understand," said Poltorátsky, lifting his hand to his cap, and rode back to his company. He led the sharpshooters to the right himself,

and ordered the sergeant-major to do the same on the left side.

The wounded Avdéev had meanwhile been taken back to the fort by some of the soldiers.

On his way back to rejoin Vorontsóv, Poltorátsky noticed behind him several horsemen who were overtaking him. In front on a white-maned horse rode a man of imposing appearance. He wore a turban, and carried weapons with gold ornaments. This man was Hadji Murád. He approached Poltorátsky and said something to him in Tartar. Raising his eyebrows, Poltorátsky made a gesture with his arms to show that he did not understand, and smiled. Hadji Murád gave him smile for smile, and that smile struck Poltorátsky by its childlike kindliness. Poltorátsky had never expected to see the terrible mountain chief look like that. He had expected to see a morose, hard-featured man; and here was a vivacious person, whose smile was so kindly that Poltorátsky felt as if he were an old acquaintance. He had only one peculiarity: his eyes, set wide apart, which gazed from under their black brows calmly, attentively, and penetratingly into the eyes of others.

Hadji Murád's suite consisted of five men. Among them was Khan Mahomá, who had been to see Prince Vorontsóv that night. He was a rosy, round-faced fellow, with black lashless eyes and a beaming expression, full of the joy of life. Then there was the Avar Khanéfi, a thickset, hairy man, whose eyebrows met. He was in charge of all Hadji Murád's property, and led a stud-bred horse which carried tightly-packed saddlebags. Two men of the suite were particularly striking. The first was a Lesghian: a youth, broad-shouldered, but with a waist as slim as a woman's, a brown beard just appearing on his face, and beautiful ram-like eyes. This was Eldár. The other, Gamzálo, was a Chechen, blind in one eye, without eyebrows or eyelashes, with a short red beard, and a scar across his nose and face. Poltorátsky pointed out to Hadji Murád, Vorontsóv, who had just appeared on the road. Hadji Murád rode to meet him, and, putting his right hand on his heart, said something in Tartar, and stopped. The Chechen interpreter translated.

"He says, 'I surrender myself to the will of the Russian Tsar. I wish to serve him,' he says. 'I wished to so do long ago but Shamil would not let me.' "

Having heard what the interpreter said, Vorontsóv stretched out his hand in its wash-leather glove to Hadji Murád. Hadji Murád looked at it hesitatingly for a moment and then pressed it firmly, again saying something, and looking first at the interpreter and then at Vorontsóv.

"He says he did not wish to surrender to anyone but you, as you are the son of the Sirdar, and he respects you much."

Vorontsóv nodded to express his thanks. Hadji Murád again said something, pointing to his suite.

"He says that these men, his henchmen, will serve the Russians as well as he."

Vorontsóv turned towards them and nodded to them too. The merry, black-eyed, lashless Chechen, Khan Mahomá, also nodded, and said something which was probably amusing, for the hairy Avar drew his lips into a smile, showing his ivory-white teeth. But the red-haired Gamzálo's one red eye just glanced at Vorontsóv and then was again fixed on the ears of his horse.

When Vorontsóv and Hadji Murád with their retinues rode back to the fort, the soldiers, released from the lines, gathered in groups and made their own comments.

"What a number of souls the damned fellow has destroyed! And now see what a fuss they will make of him!"

"Naturally. He was Shamil's right hand, and now—no fear!"

"Still there's no denying it! he's a fine fellow—a regular *dzhigít*!"[51]

"And the red one! He squints at you like a beast!"

"Ugh! He must be a hound!"

They had all specially noticed the red one. Where the wood-felling was going on, the soldiers nearest to the road ran out to look. Their officer shouted to them, but Vorontsóv stopped him.

"Let them have a look at their old friend."

"You know who that is?" he added, turning to the nearest soldier, and speaking the words slowly with his English accent.

"No, your Excellency."

"Hadji Murád. … Heard of him?"

"How could we help it, your Excellency? We've beaten him many a time!"

"Yes, and we've had it hot from him too."

"Yes, that's right, your Excellency," answered the soldier, pleased to be talking with his chief.

Hadji Murád understood that they were speaking about him, and smiled brightly with his eyes.

Vorontsóv, in the most cheerful mood, returned to the fort.

[51] Among the Chechens, a *dzhigít* is the same as a brave among the Indians, but the word is inseparably connected with the idea of skillful horsemanship. —*A. M.*

VI

Young Vorontsóv was much pleased that it was he, and no one else, who had succeeded in winning over and receiving Hadji Murád—next to Shamil Russia's chief and most active enemy. There was only one unpleasant thing about it: General Meller-Zakomélsky was in command of the army at Vozdvízhenski, and the whole affair ought to have been carried out through him; and as Vorontsóv had done everything himself without reporting it, there might be some unpleasantness; and this thought somewhat interfered with his satisfaction. On reaching his house he entrusted Hadji Murád's henchmen to the regimental adjutant, and himself showed Hadji Murád into the house.

Princess Márya Vasílevna, elegantly dressed and smiling, and her little son, a handsome curly-headed, six-year-old boy, met Hadji Murád in the drawing room. The latter placed his hands on his heart, and through the interpreter—who had entered with him—said with solemnity that he regarded himself as the Prince's *kunák*, since the Prince had brought him into his own house; and that a *kunák*'s whole family was as sacred as the *kunák* himself.

Hadji Murád's appearance and manners pleased Márya Vasílevna; and the fact that he flushed when she held out her large white hand to him, inclined her still more in his favor. She invited him to sit down; and having asked him whether he drank coffee, had some served. He, however, declined it when it came. He understood a little Russian, but could not speak it. When something was said which he could not understand he smiled, and his smile pleased Márya Vasílevna, just as it had pleased Poltorátsky. The curly-headed, keen-eyed little boy (whom his mother called Búlka) standing beside her did not take his eyes off Hadji Murád, whom he had always heard spoken of as a great warrior.

Leaving Hadji Murád with his wife, Vorontsóv went to his office to do what was necessary about reporting the fact of Hadji Murád's having come over to the Russians. When he had written a report to the general in command of the left flank—General Kozlóvsky—at Grózny, and a letter to his father, Vorontsóv hurried home, afraid that his wife might be vexed with him for forcing on her this terrible stranger, who had to be treated in such a way that he should not take offense, and yet not too kindly. But his fears were needless. Hadji Murád was sitting in an armchair with little Búlka, Vorontsóv's stepson, on his knee; and with bent head was listening attentively to the interpreter, who was translating to him the words of the laughing Márya Vasílevna. Márya

Vasílevna was telling him that if every time a *kunák* admired anything of his he made him a present of it, he would soon have to go about like Adam. …

When the Prince entered, Hadji Murád rose at once and, surprising and offending Búlka by putting him off his knee, changed the playful expression of his face to a stern and serious one; and he only sat down again when Vorontsóv had himself taken a seat.

Continuing the conversation, he answered Márya Vasílevna by telling her that it was a law among his people that anything your *kunák* admired must be presented to him.

"Thy son, *kunák*!" he said in Russian, patting the curly head of the boy, who had again climbed on his knee.

"He is delightful, your brigand!" said Márya Vasílevna, to her husband in French. "Búlka has been admiring his dagger, and he has given it to him."

Búlka showed the dagger to his father. "*C'est un objet de prix!*"[52] added she.

"*Il faudra trouver l'occasion de lui faire cadeau*,"[53] said Vorontsóv.

Hadji Murád, his eyes turned down, sat stroking the boy's curly hair and saying: "*Dzhigít, dzhigít!*"

"A beautiful, beautiful dagger," said Vorontsóv, half drawing out the sharpened blade, which had a ridge down the center. "I thank thee!"

"Ask him what I can do for him," he said to the interpreter.

The interpreter translated, and Hadji Murád at once replied that he wanted nothing, but that he begged to be taken to a place where he could say his prayers.

Vorontsóv called his valet, and told him to do what Hadji Murád desired.

As soon as Hadji Murád was alone in the room allotted to him his face altered. The pleased expression, now kindly and now stately, vanished, and a look of anxiety showed itself. Vorontsóv had received him far better than Hadji Murád had expected. But the better the reception the less did Hadji Murád trust Vorontsóv and his officers. He feared everything: that he might be seized, chained, and sent to Siberia, or simply killed; and therefore he was on his guard. He asked Eldár, when the latter entered his room, where his *murids* had been put, and whether their arms had been taken from them, and where

[52] "It is a thing of value."

[53] "We must find an opportunity to make him a present."

the horses were. Eldár reported that the horses were in the Prince's stables; that the men had been placed in a barn; that they retained their arms, and that the interpreter was giving them food and tea.

Hadji Murád shook his head in doubt, and after undressing said his prayers, and told Eldár to bring him his silver dagger. He then dressed, and, having fastened his belt, sat down with his legs on the divan to await what might befall him.

At four in the afternoon the interpreter came to call him to dine with the Prince.

At dinner he hardly ate anything except some *pilau*,[54] to which he helped himself from the very part of the dish from which Márya Vasílevna had helped herself.

"He is afraid we shall poison him," Márya Vasílevna remarked to her husband. "He has helped himself from the place where I took my helping." Then, instantly turning to Hadji Murád, she asked him through the interpreter when he would pray again. Hadji Murád lifted five fingers and pointed to the sun. "Then it will soon be time," and Vorontsóv drew out his watch and pressed a spring. The watch struck four and one quarter. This evidently surprised Hadji Murád, and he asked to hear it again, and to be allowed to look at the watch.

"*Voilà l'occasion! Donnez-lui la montre*,"[55] said the Princess to her husband.

Vorontsóv at once offered the watch to Hadji Murád.

The latter placed his hand on his breast and took the watch. Several times he touched the spring, listened, and nodded his head approvingly.

After dinner, Meller-Zakomélsky's aide-de-camp was announced.

The aide-de-camp informed the Prince that the General, having heard of Hadji Murád's arrival, was highly displeased that this had not been reported to him, and required Hadji Murád to be brought to him without delay. Vorontsóv replied that the General's command should be obeyed, and through the interpreter informed Hadji Murád of these orders, and asked him to go to Meller with him.

When Márya Vasílevna heard what the aide-de-camp had come about, she at once understood that unpleasantness might arise between her husband and the General, and decided, in spite of all her husband's attempts to dissuade her, to go with him and Hadji Murád.

"*Vous feriez bien mieux de rester—c'est mon affaire, non pas la vôtre. …*"[56]

[54] An Oriental dish, prepared with rice and mutton, or chicken.

[55] "This is the opportunity! Give him the watch."

"*Vous ne pouvez pas m'empêcher d'aller voir madame la générale!*"[57]

"You could go some other time."

"But I wish to go now!"

There was no help for it, so Vorontsóv agreed; and they all three went.

When they entered, Meller with somber politeness conducted Márya Vasílevna to his wife, and told his aide-de-camp to show Hadji Murád to the waiting room, and not let him out till further orders.

"Please …" he said to Vorontsóv, opening the door of his study and letting the Prince enter before him.

Having entered the study, he stopped in front of the Prince and said, without offering him a seat:

"I am in command here and therefore all negotiations with the enemy have to be carried on through me! Why did you not report to me the fact of Hadji Murád's having come over?"

"An emissary came to me and announced Hadji Murád's wish to capitulate only to me," replied Vorontsóv, growing pale with excitement, expecting some rude expression from the angry General and at the same time becoming infected with his anger.

"I ask you why was I not informed!"

"I intended to inform you, Baron, but …"

"You are not to address me as 'Baron,' but as 'Your Excellency'!" And here the Baron's pent-up irritation suddenly broke out, and he uttered all that had long been boiling in his soul.

"I have not served my sovereign twenty-seven years in order that men who began their service yesterday, relying on family connections, should give orders under my very nose about matters that do not concern them!"

"Your Excellency, I request you not to say things that are incorrect!" interrupted Vorontsóv.

"I am saying what is correct, and I won't allow …" said the General, still more irritably.

But at that moment Márya Vasílevna entered, rustling with her skirts, and followed by a modest-looking little lady, Meller-Zakomélsky's wife.

"Come, come, Baron! Simon did not wish to displease you," began

[56] "You would do much better to remain at home … this is my business, and not yours."

[57] "You cannot prevent my going to see the general's wife!"

Márya Vasílevna.

"I am not speaking about that, Princess. …"

"Well, well, let's forget it all! … You know, 'A bad peace is better than a good quarrel!' … Oh dear, what am I saying?" and she laughed.

The angry General capitulated to the enchanting laugh of the beauty. A smile hovered under his moustache.

"I confess I was wrong," said Vorontsóv, "but—"

"Well, and I too got rather carried away," said Meller, and held out his hand to the Prince.

Peace was reestablished, and it was decided to leave Hadji Murád for the present at Meller's, and then to send him to the commander of the left flank.

Hadji Murád sat in the next room and though he did not understand what was said, he understood what it was necessary for him to understand—namely, that they were quarrelling about him, that his desertion of Shamil was a matter of immense importance to the Russians, and that therefore not only would they not exile or kill him, but that he would be able to demand much from them. He also understood that though Meller-Zakomélsky was the commanding officer, he had not as much influence as his subordinate Vorontsóv; and that Vorontsóv was important and Meller-Zakomélsky unimportant; and therefore, when Meller-Zakomélsky sent for him and began to question him, Hadji Murád bore himself proudly and ceremoniously, saying that he had come from the mountains to serve the White Tsar, and would give account only to his Sirdar, meaning the commander-in-chief, Prince Vorontsóv, in Tiflis.

VII

The wounded Avdéev was taken to the hospital—a small wooden building roofed with boards, at the entrance of the fort—and was placed on one of the empty beds in the common ward. There were four patients in the ward: one, ill with typhus and in high fever, and another, pale, with dark shadows under his eyes, who had ague and was just expecting another attack, and yawned continually; and two more who had been wounded in a raid three weeks before: one in the hand—he was up—and the other in the shoulder; the latter was sitting on a bed. All of them, except the typhus patient, surrounded and questioned the newcomer, and those who had brought him.

"Sometimes they fire as if it were peas they were spilling over you,

and nothing happens … and this time only about five shots were fired," related one of the bearers.

"Each man gets what fate sends!"

"Oh!" groaned Avdéev loudly, trying to master his pain when they began to place him on the bed; but he stopped groaning when he was on it, and only frowned and moved his feet continually. He held his hands over his wound and looked fixedly before him.

The doctor came, and gave orders to turn the wounded man over, to see whether the bullet had passed out behind.

"What's this?" the doctor asked, pointing to the large white scars that crossed one another on the patient's back and loins.

"That was done long ago, your honor!" replied Avdéev, with a groan.

They were scars left by the flogging Avdéev had received for the money he drank.

Avdéev was again turned over, and the doctor long probed in his stomach, and found the bullet, but failed to extract it. He put a dressing on the wound, and having stuck plaster over it went away. During the whole time the doctor was probing and bandaging the wound Avdéev lay with clenched teeth and closed eyes, but when the doctor had gone he opened them and looked around as though amazed. His eyes were turned on the other patients and on the surgeon's orderly, but he seemed to see not them, but something else that surprised him.

His friends, Panóv and Serógin, came in; but Avdéev continued to lie in the same position, looking before him with surprise. It was long before he recognized his comrades, though his eyes gazed straight at them.

"I say, Peter, have you no message to send home?" said Panóv.

Avdéev did not answer, though he was looking Panóv in the face.

"I say, haven't you any orders to send home?" again repeated Panóv, touching Avdéev's cold, large-boned hand.

Avdéev seemed to come to.

"Ah! … Panóv!"

"Yes, I'm here. … I've come! Have you nothing for home? Serógin would write a letter."

"Serógin …" said Avdéev moving his eyes with difficulty towards Serógin, "will you write? … Well then, write so: 'Your son,' say, 'Peter, has given orders that you should live long.[58] He envied his brother' … I

[58] A popular expression, meaning that the sender of the message is already dead. —*A. M.*

told you about that today … 'and now he is himself glad. Don't worry him. … Let him live. God grant it him. I am glad!' Write that."

Having said this he was silent for some time with his eyes fixed on Panóv.

"And did you find your pipe?" he suddenly asked. Panóv did not reply.

"Your pipe … your pipe! I mean, have you found it?" Avdéev repeated.

"It was in my bag."

"That's right! … Well, and now give me a candle … I am going to die," said Avdéev.

Just then Poltorátsky came in to inquire after his soldier.

"How goes it, my lad! Badly?" said he.

Avdéev closed his eyes and shook his head negatively. His broad-cheeked face was pale and stern. He did not reply, but again said to Panóv:

"Bring a candle. … I am going to die."

A wax taper was placed in his hand, but his fingers would not bend, so it was placed between them, and held up for him.

Poltorátsky went away, and five minutes later the orderly put his ear to Avdéev's heart and said that all was over.

Avdéev's death was described in the following manner in the report sent to Tiflis:

> "*23rd Nov.*—Two companies of the Kurín regiment advanced from the fort on a wood-felling expedition. At midday a considerable number of mountaineers suddenly attacked the wood-fellers. The sharpshooters began to retreat, but the 2nd Company charged with the bayonet and overthrew the mountaineers. In this affair two privates were slightly wounded and one killed. The mountaineers lost about a hundred men killed and wounded."

VIII

On the day Peter Avdéev died in the hospital at Vozdvízhensk, his old father, the wife of the brother in whose stead he had enlisted, and that brother's daughter—who was already approaching womanhood and almost of age to get married—were threshing oats on the hard-frozen threshing floor.

The day before, there had been a heavy fall of snow followed towards morning by a severe frost. The old man woke when the cocks were crowing for the third time, and seeing the bright moonlight through the frozen windowpanes, got down from the oven-top, put on his boots, his sheepskin coat and cap, and went out to the threshing floor. Having worked there for a couple of hours, he returned to the hut and awoke his son and the women. When the woman and girl came to the threshing floor they found it ready swept, with a wooden shovel sticking in the dry white snow, and beside it birch brooms with the twigs upwards, and two rows of oat sheaves laid ears to ears in a long line the whole length of the clean threshing floor. They chose their flails and started threshing, keeping time with their triple blows. The old man struck powerfully with his heavy flail, breaking the straw; the girl struck the ears from above with measured blows; and his daughter-in-law turned the oats over with her flail.

The moon had set, dawn was breaking, and they were finishing the line of sheaves when Akím, the eldest son, in his sheepskin and cap, joined the threshers.

"What are you lazing about for?" shouted his father to him, pausing in his work and leaning on his flail.

"The horses had to be seen to."

" 'Horses seen to!' " the father repeated, mimicking him. "The old woman will look after them. … Take your flail! You're getting too fat, you drunkard!"

"Have you been standing me treat?" muttered the son.

"What?" said the old man, frowning sternly and missing a stroke.

The son silently took a flail, and they began threshing with four flails.

Trak, tapatam … trak, tapatam … trak … came down the old man's heavy flail after the three others.

"Why, you've got a nape like a goodly gentleman! … Look here, my trousers have hardly anything to hang on!" said the old man, omitting his stroke and only swinging his flail in the air, so as not to get out of time.

They had finished the row, and the women began removing the straw with rakes.

"Peter was a fool to go in your stead. They'd have knocked the nonsense out of you in the army; and he was worth five of such as you at home!"

"That's enough, father," said the daughter-in-law, as she threw aside the binders that had come off the sheaves.

"Yes, feed the six of you, and get no work out of a single one! Peter used to work for two. He was not like …"

Along the trodden path from the house came the old man's wife, the frozen snow creaking under the new bark shoes she wore over her tightly wound woolen leg-bands. The men were shovelling the unwinnowed grain into heaps, the woman and the girl sweeping up what remained.

"The Elder has been, and orders everybody to go and work for the master, carting bricks," said the old woman. "I've got breakfast ready. … Come along, won't you?"

"All right. … Harness the roan and go," said the old man to Akím, "and you'd better look out that you don't get me into trouble, as you did the other day! … I can't help regretting Peter!"

"When he was at home you used to scold him," retorted Akím. "Now he's away you keep nagging at me."

"That shows you deserve it," said his mother in the same angry tones. "You'll never be Peter's equal."

"Oh, all right," said the son.

" 'All right,' indeed! You've drunk the meal, and now you say 'all right!' "

"Let bygones be bygones!" said the daughter-in-law.

The disagreements between father and son had begun long ago—almost from the time Peter went as a soldier. Even then the old man felt that he had parted with an eagle for a cuckoo. It is true that it was right—as the old man understood it—for a childless man to go in place of a family man. Akím had four children, and Peter had none; but Peter was a worker like his father, skilful, observant, strong, enduring, and above all, industrious. He was always at work. If he happened to pass by where people were working he lent a helping hand, as his father would have done, and took a turn or two with the scythe, or loaded a cart, or felled a tree, or chopped some wood. The old man regretted his going away, but there was no help for it. Conscription in those days was like death. A soldier was a severed branch; and to think about him at home was to tear one's heart uselessly. Only occasionally, to prick his elder son, did the father mention him, as he had done that day. But his mother often thought of her younger son, and for a long time—more than a year now—she had been asking her husband to send Peter a little money, but the old man had made no reply.

The Kúrenkovs were a well-to-do family, and the old man had some savings hidden away; but he would on no account have consented to touch what he had laid by. Now, however, his old woman, having heard

him mention their younger son, made up her mind to ask him again to send him at least a ruble after selling the oats. This she did. As soon as the young people had gone to work for the proprietor, and the old folks were left alone together, she persuaded him to send Peter a ruble out of the oats-money.

So when ninety-six bushels of the winnowed oats had been packed onto three sledges, lined with sacking carefully pinned together at the top with wooden skewers, she gave her husband a letter written at her dictation by the church clerk; and the old man promised when he got to town to enclose a ruble, and send it off to the right address.

The old man, dressed in a new sheepskin with homespun cloak over it, his legs wrapped round with warm white woollen leg-bands, took the letter, placed it in his wallet, said a prayer, got into the front sledge, and drove to town. His grandson drove in the last sledge. When he reached town the old man asked the innkeeper to read the letter to him, and listened to it attentively and approvingly.

In her letter Peter's mother first sent him her blessing, then greetings from everybody, and the news of his godfather's death; and at the end she added that Aksínya (Peter's wife) had not wished to stay with them, but had gone into service, where they heard she was living honestly and well. Then came a reference to that present of a ruble; and finally, in her own words, what the old woman, with tears in her eyes and yielding to her sorrow, had dictated and the church clerk had taken down exactly, word for word:

"One thing more, my darling child, my sweet dove, my own Peterkin! I have wept my eyes out lamenting for thee, thou light of my eyes. To whom has thou left me? …" At this point the old woman had sobbed and wept, and said: "That will do!" So the words stood in the letter; but it was not fated that Peter should receive the news of his wife's having left home, nor the present of the ruble, nor his mother's last words. The letter with the money in it came back with the announcement that Peter had been killed in the war, "defending his Tsar, his Fatherland, and the Orthodox Faith." That is how the army clerk expressed it.

The old woman, when this news reached her, wept for as long as she could spare time, and then set to work again. The very next Sunday she went to church, and had a requiem chanted, and Peter's name entered among those for whose souls prayers were to be said; and she distributed bits of holy bread to all the good people, in memory of Peter, the servant of God.

Aksínya, his widow, also lamented loudly when she heard of the

death of her beloved husband, with whom she had lived but one short year. She regretted her husband, and her own ruined life; and in her lamentations mentioned Peter's brown locks and his love, and the sadness of her life with her little orphaned Vánka; and bitterly reproached Peter for having had pity on his brother, but none on her—obliged to wander among strangers!

But in the depth of her soul Aksínya was glad of her husband's death. She was pregnant by the shopman with whom she was living; and no one would now have a right to scold her, and the shopman could marry her as, when he was persuading her to yield, he had said he would.

IX

Michael Seménovich Vorontsóv, being the son of the Russian Ambassador, had been educated in England, and possessed a European education quite exceptional among the higher Russian officials of his day. He was ambitious, gentle, and kind in his manner with inferiors, and a finished courtier with superiors. He did not understand life without power and submission. He had obtained all the highest ranks and decorations, and was looked upon as a clever commander, and even as the conqueror of Napoleon at Krásnoye.[59]

In 1852 he was over seventy, but was still quite fresh, moved briskly, and above all was in full possession of a facile, refined, and agreeable intellect which he used to maintain his power and strengthen and increase his popularity. He possessed large means—his own and his wife's (née countess Branítski)—and received an enormous salary as Viceroy; and he spent a great part of his means on building a palace and laying out a garden on the south coast of the Crimea.

On the evening of December the 4th, 1852, a courier's troika drew up before his palace in Tiflis. A tired officer, black with dust, whom General Kozlovski had sent with the news of Hadji Murád's surrender to the Russians, went stretching the stiffened muscles of his legs past the sentinel, and entered the wide porch. It was six o'clock, and Vorontsóv was just going in to dinner, when he was informed of the courier's arrival. Vorontsóv received him at once, and was therefore a few minutes late for dinner.

[59] A town thirty miles southwest of Smolensk, at which, in November 1812, the rearguard of Napoleon's army was defeated during the retreat from Moscow. It is mentioned in *War and Peace*. —*A. M.*

When he entered the drawing room, the thirty persons invited to dine, sitting beside Princess Elizabeth Ksavérevna Vorontsóva, or standing in groups by the windows, turned their faces towards him. Vorontsóv was dressed in his usual black military coat, with shoulder-straps but no epaulets, and wore the White Cross of the Order of St. George at his neck.

His clean-shaven, foxlike face wore a pleasant smile as, screwing up his eyes, he surveyed the assembly. Entering with quick, soft steps he apologized to the ladies for being late, greeted the men, and approaching Princess Manana Orbelyáni—a tall, fine, handsome woman of Oriental type about forty-five years of age—he offered her his arm to take her in to dinner. The Princess Elizabeth Ksavérevna Vorontsóva herself gave her arm to a red-haired general with bristly mustaches who was visiting Tiflis. A Georgian prince offered his arm to Princess Vorontsóva's friend, the Countess Choiseuil; Doctor Andréevsky, the aide-de-camp, and others, with ladies or without, followed these first couples. Footmen in livery and knee-breeches drew back and replaced the guests' chairs when they sat down, while the majordomo ceremoniously ladled out steaming soup from a silver tureen.

Vorontsóv took his place in the center of one side of the long table, and wife sat opposite, with the General on her right. On the Prince's right sat his lady, the beautiful Orbelyáni; and on his left was a graceful, dark, red-cheeked Georgian woman, glittering with jewels and incessantly smiling.

"*Excellentes, chère amie!*"[60] replied Vorontsóv to his wife's inquiry about what news the courier had brought him. "*Simon a eu de la chance!*"[61] And he began to tell aloud, so that everyone could hear, the striking news (for him alone not quite unexpected, because negotiations had long been going on) that the bravest and most famous of Shamil's officers, Hadji Murád, had come over to the Russians and would in a day or two be brought to Tiflis.

Everybody—even the young aides-de-camp and officials who sat at the far ends of the table, and who had been quietly laughing at something among themselves—became silent and listened.

"And you, General, have you ever met this Hadji Murád?" asked the Princess of her neighbor, the carroty General with the bristly mustaches, when the Prince had finished speaking.

"More than once, Princess."

[60] "Excellent, my dear!"

[61] "Simon has had good luck."

And the General went on to tell how Hadji Murád, after the mountaineers had captured Gergebel in 1843, had fallen upon General Pahlen's detachment and killed Colonel Zolotúkhin almost before their very eyes.

Vorontsóv listened to the General and smiled amiably, evidently pleased that the latter had joined in the conversation. But suddenly his face assumed an absentminded and depressed expression.

The General, having started talking, had begun to tell of his second encounter with Hadji Murád.

"Why, it was he, if your Excellency will please remember," said the General, "who arranged the ambush that attacked the rescue party in the 'Biscuit' expedition."

"Where?" asked Vorontsóv, screwing up his eyes.

What the brave General spoke of as the "rescue," was the affair in the unfortunate Dargo campaign in which a whole detachment, including Prince Vorontsóv who commanded it, would certainly have perished had it not been rescued by the arrival of fresh troops. Everyone knew that the whole Dargo campaign under Vorontsóv's command—in which the Russians lost many killed and wounded and several cannons—had been a shameful affair; and therefore if anyone mentioned it in Vorontsóv's presence, they did so only in the aspect in which Vorontsóv had reported it to the Tsar: as a brilliant achievement of the Russian army. But the word "rescue" plainly indicated that it was not a brilliant victory but a blunder costing many lives. Everybody understood this, and some pretended not to notice the meaning of the General's words, others nervously waited to see what would follow, while a few exchanged glances and smiled. Only the carroty General with the bristly mustaches noticed nothing, and carried away by his narrative, quietly replied:

"At the rescue, your Excellency."

Having started on his favorite theme, the General recounted circumstantially how Hadji Murád had so cleverly cut the detachment in two, that if the rescue party had not arrived (he seemed to be particularly fond of repeating the word "rescue") not a man in the division would have escaped, because … The General did not finish his story, for Manana Orbelyáni, having understood what was happening, interrupted him by asking if he had found comfortable quarters in Tiflis. The General, surprised, glanced at everybody all round and saw his aides-de-camp from the end of the table looking fixedly and significantly at him, and suddenly he understood! Without replying to the Princess's question, he frowned, became silent, and began hurriedly

eating, without chewing, the delicacy that lay on his plate, both the appearance and taste of which completely mystified him.

Everybody felt uncomfortable, but the discomfort of the situation was relieved by the Georgian prince—a very stupid man, but an extraordinarily refined and artful flatterer and courtier—who sat on the other side of Princess Vorontsóva. Without seeming to have noticed anything, he began to relate how Hadji Murád had carried off the widow of Akhmet Khan of Mekhtulí.

"He came into the village at night, seized what he wanted, and galloped off again with the whole party."

"Why did he want that particular woman?" asked the Princess.

"Oh, he was her husband's enemy, and pursued him, but could never once succeed in meeting him right up to the time of his death, so he revenged himself on the widow."

The Princess translated this into French for her old friend Countess Choiseuil, who sat next to the Georgian prince.

"*Quelle horreur!*"[62] said the countess, closing her eyes and shaking her head.

"Oh no!" said Vorontsóv, smiling. "I have been told that he treated his captive with chivalrous respect and afterwards released her."

"Yes, for a ransom!"

"Well, of course. But all the same he acted honorably."

These words of the Prince's set the tone for the further conversation. The courtiers understood that the more importance was attributed to Hadji Murád the better the Prince would be pleased.

"The man's audacity is amazing. A remarkable man!"

"Why, in 1849 he dashed into Temir Khan Shurá, and plundered the shops in broad daylight."

An Armenian sitting at the end of the table, who had been in Temir Khan Shurá at the time, related the particulars of that exploit of Hadji Murád's.

In fact, Hadji Murád was talked about during the whole dinner.

Everybody in succession praised his courage, his ability, and his magnanimity. Someone mentioned his having ordered twenty six prisoners to be slain; but that too was met by the usual rejoinder, "What's to be done? *À la guerre, comme à la guerre!*"[63]

"He is a great man."

"Had he been born in Europe he might have been another

[62] "How horrible!"

[63] "War is war."

Napoleon," said the stupid Georgian prince with a gift of flattery.

He knew that every mention of Napoleon was pleasant to Vorontsóv, who wore the White Cross at his neck as a reward for having defeated him.

"Well, not Napoleon, perhaps, but a gallant cavalry general, if you like," said Vorontsóv.

"If not Napoleon, then Murat."

"And his name is Hadji *Murád!*"

"Hadji Murád has surrendered, and now there'll be an end to Shamil also," someone remarked.

"They feel that now"—this "now" meant under Vorontsóv—"they can't hold out," remarked another.

"*Tout cela est grâce à vous!*"[64] said Manana Orbelyáni.

Prince Vorontsóv tried to moderate the waves of flattery which began to flow over him. Still, it was pleasant, and in the best of spirits he led his lady back into the drawing room.

After dinner, when coffee was being served in the drawing room, the Prince was particularly amiable to everybody, and going up to the General with the red bristly mustaches he tried to appear not to have noticed his blunder.

Having made a round of the visitors, he sat down to the card table. He only played the old-fashioned game of ombre. His partners were the Georgian prince, an Armenian general (who had learned the game of ombre from Prince Vorontsóv's valet), and Doctor Andréevsky, a man remarkable for the great influence he exercised.

Placing beside him his gold snuffbox, with a portrait of Aleksandr I on the lid, the Prince tore open a pack of highly-glazed cards, and was going to spread them out, when his Italian valet, Giovanni, brought him a letter on a silver tray.

"Another courier, your Excellency."

Vorontsóv laid down the cards, excused himself, opened the letter, and began to read.

The letter was from his son, who described Hadji Murád's surrender and his own encounter with Meller-Zakomélsky.

The Princess came up and inquired what their son had written.

"It's all about the same matter. … *Il a eu quelques désagréments avec le commandant de la place. Simon a eu tort.* …[65] But 'All's well

[64] "All this is thanks to you!"

[65] "He has had some unpleasantness with the commandant of the place. Simon was in the wrong."

that ends well,' " he added in English, handing the letter to his wife; and turning to his respectfully waiting partners, he asked them to draw cards.

When the first round had been dealt, Vorontsóv did what he was in the habit of doing when in a particularly pleasant mood: with his white, wrinkled old hand he took out a pinch of French snuff, carried it to his nose, and released it.

X

When, next day, Hadji Murád appeared at the Prince's palace, the waiting room was already full of people. Yesterday's general with the bristly mustaches was there in full uniform, with all his decorations, having come to take leave. There was the commander of a regiment who was in danger of being court-martialled for misappropriating commisariat money; and there was a rich Armenian (patronized by Doctor Andréevsky) who wanted to obtain from the Government a renewal of his monopoly for the sale of vodka. There, dressed in black, was the widow of an officer who had been killed in action. She had come to ask for a pension, or for free education for her children. There was a ruined Georgian prince in a magnificent Georgian costume, who was trying to obtain for himself some confiscated Church property. There was an official with a large roll of paper containing a new plan for subjugating the Caucasus. There was also a Khan, who had come solely to be able to tell his people at home that he had called on the Prince.

They all waited their turn, and were one by one shown into the Prince's cabinet and out again by the aide-de-camp, a handsome, fair-haired youth.

When Hadji Murád entered the waiting room with his brisk though limping step all eyes were turned towards him and he heard his name whispered from various parts of the room.

He was dressed in a long white Circassian coat over a brown *beshmét* trimmed round the collar with fine silver lace. He wore black leggings and soft shoes of the same color, which were stretched over his instep as tight as gloves. On his head he wore a high cap, draped turban-fashion—that same turban for which, on the denunciation of Akhmet Khan, he had been arrested by General Klügenau, and which had been the cause of his going over to Shamil.

He stepped briskly across the parquet floor of the waiting room, his whole slender figure swaying slightly in consequence of his lameness in

one leg, which was shorter than the other. His eyes, set far apart, looked calmly before him and seemed to see no one.

The handsome aide-de-camp, having greeted him, asked him to take a seat while he went to announce him to the Prince; but Hadji Murád declined to sit down and, putting his hand on his dagger, stood with one foot advanced, looking round contemptuously at all those present.

The Prince's interpreter, Prince Tarkhánov, approached Hadji Murád and spoke to him. Hadji Murád answered abruptly and unwillingly. A Kumýk prince, who was there to lodge a complaint against a police official, came out of the Prince's room, and then the aide-de-camp called Hadji Murád, led him to the door of the cabinet, and showed him in.

Vorontsóv received Hadji Murád standing beside his table. The white old face did not wear yesterday's smile, but was rather stern and solemn.

On entering the large room, with its enormous table and great windows with green venetian blinds, Hadji Murád placed his small sunburnt hands on that part of his chest where the front of his white coat overlapped, and, having lowered his eyes, began without hurrying to speak in Tartar distinctly and respectfully, using the Kumýk dialect which he spoke well.

"I place myself under the powerful protection of the great Tsar and of yourself," said he, "and promise to serve the White Tsar in faith and truth to the last drop of my blood, and I hope to be useful to you in the war with Shamil, who is my enemy and yours."

Having heard the interpreter out, Vorontsóv glanced at Hadji Murád, and Hadji Murád glanced at Vorontsóv.

The eyes of the two men met, and expressed to each other much that could not have been put into words, and that was not at all what the interpreter said. Without words they told each other the whole truth. Vorontsóv's eyes said that he did not believe a single word Hadji Murád was saying, and that he knew he was and always would be an enemy to everything Russian, and had surrendered only because he was obliged to. Hadji Murád understood this, and yet continued to give assurances of his fidelity. His eyes said, "That old man ought to be thinking of his death, and not of war; but though he is old he is cunning, and I must be careful." Vorontsóv understood this also, but nevertheless spoke to Hadji Murád in the way he considered necessary for the success of the war.

"Tell him," said Vorontsóv, "that our sovereign is as merciful as he is mighty, and will probably at my request pardon him and take

him into his service. … Have you told him?" he asked looking at Hadji Murád. … "Until I receive my master's gracious decision, tell him I take it on myself to receive him and make his sojourn among us pleasant."

Hadji Murád again pressed his hands to the center of his chest, and began to say something with animation.

"He says," the interpreter translated, "that formerly, when he governed Avaria in 1839, he served the Russians faithfully, and would never have deserted them had not his enemy, Akhmet Khan, wishing to ruin him, calumniated him to General Klügenau."

"I know, I know," said Vorontsóv (though, if he had ever known, he had long forgotten it). "I know," said he, sitting down and motioning Hadji Murád to the divan that stood beside the wall. But Hadji Murád did not sit down. Shrugging his powerful shoulders as a sign that he could not bring himself to sit in the presence of so important a man, he went on, addressing the interpreter:

"Akhmet Khan and Shamil are both my enemies. Tell the Prince that Akhmet Khan is dead and I cannot revenge myself on him; but Shamil lives, and I will not die without taking vengeance on him," said he, knitting his brows and tightly closing his mouth.

"Yes, yes; but how does he want to revenge himself on Shamil?" said Vorontsóv quietly to the interpreter. "And tell him he may sit down."

Hadji Murád again declined to sit down; and, in answer to the question, replied that his object in coming over to the Russians was to help them to destroy Shamil.

"Very well, very well," said Vorontsóv; "but what exactly does he wish to do? … Sit down, sit down!"

Hadji Murád sat down, and said that if only they would send him to the Lesghian line, and would give him an army, he would guarantee to raise the whole of Daghestan, and Shamil would then be unable to hold out.

"That would be excellent. … I'll think it over," said Vorontsóv.

The interpreter translated Vorontsóv's words to Hadji Murád.

Hadji Murád pondered.

"Tell the Sirdar one thing more," Hadji Murád began again: "that my family are in the hands of my enemy, and that as long as they are in the mountains I am bound, and cannot serve him. Shamil would kill my wife and my mother and my children if I went openly against him. Let the Prince first exchange my family for the prisoners he has, and then I will destroy Shamil or die!"

"All right, all right," said Vorontsóv. "I will think it over. … Now

let him go to the chief of the staff, and explain to him in detail his position, intentions, and wishes."

Thus ended the first interview between Hadji Murád and Vorontsóv.

That evening, at the new theatre, which was decorated in Oriental style, an Italian opera was performed. Vorontsóv was in his box when the striking figure of the limping Hadji Murád wearing a turban appeared in the stalls. He came in with Lóris-Mélikov,[66] Vorontsóv's aide-de-camp, in whose charge he was placed, and took a seat in the front row. Having sat through the first act with Oriental, Mohammedan dignity, expressing no pleasure, but only obvious indifference, he rose and looking calmly round at the audience went out, drawing to himself everybody's attention.

The next day was Monday, and there was the usual evening party at the Vorontsóvs'. In the large brightly-lighted hall a band was playing, hidden among trees. Young women and not very young women, in dresses that displayed their bare necks, arms, and breasts, turned round and round in the embrace of men in bright uniforms. At the buffet, footmen in red swallowtail coats and wearing shoes and knee-breeches, poured out champagne and served sweetmeats to the ladies. The "Sirdar's" wife also, in spite of her age, went about half-dressed among the visitors, smiling affably, and through the interpreter said a few amiable words to Hadji Murád, who glanced at the visitors with the same indifference he had shown yesterday in the theater. After the hostess, other half-naked women came up to him, and all of them stood shamelessly before him and smilingly asked him the same question: How he liked what he saw? Vorontsóv himself, wearing gold epaulets and gold shoulder-knots, with his white cross and ribbon at his neck, came up and asked him the same question, evidently feeling sure, like all the others, that Hadji Murád could not help being pleased at what he saw. Hadji Murád replied to Vorontsóv as he had replied to them all, that among his people nothing of the kind was done, without expressing an opinion as to whether it was good or bad that it was so.

Here at the ball Hadji Murád tried to speak to Vorontsóv about buying out his family; but Vorontsóv, pretending that he had not heard him, walked away; and Lóris-Mélikov afterwards told Hadji Murád that this was not the place to talk about business.

When it struck eleven Hadji Murád, having made sure of the time

[66] Count Michael Tariélovich Lóris-Mélikov, who afterwards became Minister of the Interior and framed the Liberal *ukase* which was signed by Alexander II the day that he was assassinated. —*A. M.*

by the watch the Vorontsóvs had given him, asked Lóris-Mélikov whether he might now leave. Lóris-Mélikov said he might, though it would be better to stay. In spite of this Hadji Murád did not stay, but drove in the phaeton placed at his disposal to the quarters that had been assigned to him.

XI

On the fifth day of Hadji Murád's stay in Tiflis, Lóris-Mélikov, the Viceroy's aide-de-camp, came to see him at the latter's command.

"My head and my hands are glad to serve the Sirdar," said Hadji Murád with his usual diplomatic expression, bowing his head and putting his hands to his chest. "Command me!" said he, looking amiably into Lóris-Mélikov's face.

Lóris-Mélikov sat down in an armchair placed by the table, and Hadji Murád sank onto a low divan opposite, and resting his hands on his knees, bowed his head and listened attentively to what the other said to him.

Lóris-Mélikov, who spoke Tartar fluently, told him that though the Prince knew about his past life, he yet wanted to hear the whole story from himself.

"Tell it me, and I will write it down and translate it into Russian, and the Prince will send it to the Emperor."

Hadji Murád remained silent for a while (he never interrupted anyone, but always waited to see whether his interlocutor had not something more to say). Then he raised his head, shook back his cap, and smiled the peculiar childlike smile that had captivated Márya Vasílevna.

"I can do that," said he, evidently flattered by the thought that his story would be read by the Emperor.

"Thou must tell me" (nobody is addressed as "you" in Tartar) "everything, deliberately from the beginning," said Lóris-Mélikov, drawing a notebook from his pocket.

"I can do that, only there is much—very much—to tell! Many events have happened!" said Hadji Murád.

"If thou canst not do it all in one day, thou wilt finish it another time," said Lóris-Mélikov.

"Shall I begin at the beginning?"

"Yes, at the very beginning … where thou wast born, and where thou didst live."

Hadji Murád's head sank, and he sat in that position for a long time. Then he took a stick that lay beside the divan, drew a little knife with an ivory gold-inlaid handle, sharp as a razor, from under his dagger, and started whittling the stick with it and speaking at the same time.

"Write: Born in Tselméss, a small *aoul*, 'the size of an ass's head,' as we in the mountains say," he began. "Not far from it, about two cannon-shots, lies Khunzákh, where the Khans lived. Our family was closely connected with them.

"My mother, when my eldest brother Osman was born, nursed the eldest Khan, Abu Nutsal Khan. Then she nursed the second son of the Khan, Umma Khan, and reared him; but Akhmet, my second brother, died; and when I was born and the Khansha[67] bore Bulách Khan, my mother would not go as wet-nurse again. My father ordered her to, but she would not. She said: 'I should again kill my own son; and I will not go.' Then my father, who was passionate, struck her with a dagger, and would have killed her had they not rescued her from him. So she did not give me up, and later on she composed a song … but I need not tell that."

"Yes, you must tell everything. It is necessary," said Lóris-Mélikov.

Hadji Murád grew thoughtful. He remembered how his mother had laid him to sleep beside her under a fur coat on the roof of the *sáklya*, and he had asked her to show him the place in her side where the scar of her wound was still visible.

He repeated the song, which he remembered:

"My white bosom was pierced by the blade of bright steel,
But I laid my bright sun, my dear boy, close upon it
Till his body was bathed in the stream of my blood.
And the wound healed without aid of herbs or of grass.
As I feared not death, so my boy will ne'er fear it.

"My mother is now in Shamil's hands," he added, "and she must be rescued."

He remembered the fountain below the hill, when holding on to his mother's *sharovdry*[68] he had gone with her for water. He remembered how she had shaved his head for the first time, and how the reflection of his round bluish head in the shining brass vessel that hung on the wall had astonished him. He remembered a lean dog that had licked his

[67] *Khansha*: Khan's wife.

[68] *Sharovdry*: Loose Turkish trousers.

face. He remembered the strange smell of the *lepéshki*[69] his mother had given him—a smell of smoke and of sour milk. He remembered how his mother had carried him in a basket on her back to visit his grandfather at the farmstead. He remembered his wrinkled grandfather with his grey hairs, and how he had hammered silver with his sinewy hands.

"Well, so my mother did not go as nurse," he said with a jerk of his head, "and the Khansha took another nurse, but still remained fond of my mother; and my mother used to take us children to the Khansha's palace, and we played with her children, and she was fond of us.

"There were three young Khans: Abu Nutsal Khan, my brother Osman's foster-brother; Umma Khan, my own sworn brother; and Bulách Khan, the youngest—whom Shamil threw over the precipice. But that happened later.

"I was about sixteen when *murids* began to visit the *aouls*. They beat the stones with wooden scimitars and cried 'Mussulmans, *Ghazavát*!' The Chechens all went over to Muridism, and the Avars began to go over too. I was then living in the palace like a brother of the Khans. I could do as I liked, and I became rich. I had horses and weapons and money. I lived for pleasure and had no care, and went on like that till the time when Kazi-Mullá, the Imam, was killed and Hamzád succeeded him. Hamzád sent envoys to the Khans to say that if they did not join the *Ghazavát* he would destroy Khunzákh.

"This needed consideration. The Khans feared the Russians, but were also afraid to join in the Holy War. The old Khansha sent me with her second son, Umma Khan, to Tiflis, to ask the Russian Commander-in-Chief for help against Hamzád. The Commander-in-Chief at Tiflis was Baron Rosen. He did not receive either me or Umma Khan. He sent word that he would help us, but did nothing. Only his officers came riding to us and played cards with Umma Khan. They made him drunk with wine and took him to bad places; and he lost all he had to them at cards. His body was as strong as a bull's, and he was as brave as a lion, but his soul was weak as water. He would have gambled away his last horses and weapons if I had not made him come away.

"After visiting Tiflis my ideas changed, and I advised the old Khansha and the Khans to join the *Ghazavát*. …"

"What made you change your mind?" asked Lóris-Mélikov. "Were you not pleased with the Russians?"

Hadji Murád paused.

"No, I was not pleased," he answered decidedly, closing his eyes.

[69] *Lepéshki*: A kind of flat cake.

"And there was also another reason why I wished to join the *Ghazavát*."

"What was that?"

"Why, near Tselméss the Khan and I encountered three *murids*, two of whom escaped, but the third one I shot with my pistol.

"He was still alive when I approached to take his weapons. He looked up at me, and said, 'Thou has killed me … I am happy; but thou are a Mussulman, young and strong. Join the *Ghazavát*! God wills it!' "

"And did you join it?"

"I did not, but it made me think," said Hadji Murád, and he went on with his tale.

"When Hamzád approached Kunzákh we sent our Elders to him to say that we would agree to join the *Ghazavát* if the Imam would sent a learned man to explain it to us. Hamzád had our Elders' mustaches shaved off, their nostrils pierced, and cakes hung to their noses; and in that condition he sent them back to us.

"The Elders brought word that Hamzád was ready to send a sheik to teach us the *Ghazavát*, but only if the Khansha sent him her youngest son as a hostage. She took him at his word and sent her youngest son, Bulách Khan. Hamzád received him well, and sent to invite the two elder brothers also. He sent word that he wished to serve the Khans as his father had served their father. … The Khansha was a weak, stupid, and conceited woman, as all women are when they are not under control. She was afraid to send away both sons, and sent only Umma Khan. I went with him. We were met by *murids* about a mile before we arrived, and they sang and shot and caracoled around us; and when we drew near, Hamzád came out of his tent and went up to Umma Khan's stirrup and received him as a Khan. He said:

" 'I have not done any harm to thy family, and do not wish to do any. Only do not kill me, and do not prevent my bringing the people over to the *Ghazavát*, and I will serve you with my whole army, as my father served your father! Let me live in your house, and I will help you with my advice, and you shall do as you like!'

"Umma Khan was slow of speech. He did not know how to reply and remained silent. Then I said that if this was so, let Hamzád come to Khunzákh, and the Khansha and the Khans would receive him with honor … but I was not allowed to finish—and here I first encountered Shamil, who was beside the Imam. He said to me:

" 'Thou has not been asked. … It was the Khan!'

"I was silent, and Hamzád led Umma Khan into his tent. After-

wards Hamzád called me and ordered me to go to Kunzákh with his envoys. I went. The envoys began persuading the Khansha to send her eldest son also to Hamzád. I saw there was treachery, and told her not to send him; but a woman has as much sense in her head as an egg has hair. She ordered her son to go. Abu Nutsal Khan did not wish to. Then she said, 'I see thou are afraid!' Like a bee she knew where to sting him most painfully. Abu Nutsal Khan flushed, and did not speak to her any more, but ordered his horse to be saddled. I went with him.

"Hamzád met us with even greater honor than he had shown Umma Khan. He himself rode out two rifle-shot lengths down the hill to meet us. A large party of horsemen with their banners followed him, and they too sang, shot, and caracoled.

"When we reached the camp, Hamzád led the Khan into his tent, and I remained with the horses. …

"I was some way down the hill when I heard shots fired in Hamzád's tent. I ran there, and saw Umma Khan lying prone in a pool of blood, and Abu Nutsal was fighting the *murids*. One of his cheeks had been hacked off and hung down. He supported it with one hand and with the other stabbed with his dagger at all who came near him. I saw him strike down Hamzád's brother and aim a blow at another man; but then the *murids* fired at him and he fell."

Hadji Murád stopped, and his sunburnt face flushed a dark red, and his eyes became bloodshot.

"I was seized with fear and ran away."

"Really? … I thought thou never wast afraid," said Lóris-Mélikov.

"Never after that. … Since then I have always remembered that shame, and when I recalled it I feared nothing!"

XII

"But enough! It is time for me to pray," said Hadji Murád, drawing from an inner breast-pocket of his Circassian coat Vorontsóv's repeater watch and carefully pressing the spring. The repeater struck twelve and a quarter. Hadji Murád listened with his head on one side, repressing a childlike smile.

"*Kunák* Vorontsóv's present," he said, smiling.

"It is a good watch," said Lóris-Mélikov. "Well then, go thou and pray, and I will wait."

"*Yakshí.* Very well," said Hadji Murád and went to his bedroom.

Left by himself, Lóris-Mélikov wrote down in his notebook the chief things Hadji Murád had related; and then lighting a cigarette, began to pace up and down the room. On reaching the door opposite the bedroom, he heard animated voices speaking rapidly in Tartar. He guessed that the speakers were Hadji Murád's *murids*, and, opening the door, he went to them.

The room was impregnated with that special leathery acid smell peculiar to the mountaineers. On a burka spread out on the floor sat the one-eyed, red-haired Gamzálo, in a tattered greasy *beshmét*, plaiting a bridle. He was saying something excitedly, speaking in a hoarse voice; but when Lóris-Mélikov entered he immediately became silent, and continued his work without paying any attention to him.

In front of Gamzálo stood the merry Khan Mahomá, showing his white teeth, his black lashless eyes glittering, and saying something over and over again. The handsome Eldár, his sleeves turned up on his strong arms, was polishing the girths of a saddle suspended from a nail. Khanéfi, the principal worker and manager of the household, was not there; he was cooking their dinner in the kitchen.

"What were you disputing about?" asked Lóris-Mélikov, after greeting them.

"Why, he keeps on praising Shamil," said Khan Mahomá, giving his hand to Lóris-Mélikov. "He says Shamil is a great man, learned, holy, and a *dzhigít*."

"How is it that he has left him and still praises him?"

"He has left him and still praises him," repeated Khan Mahomá, his teeth showing and his eyes glittering.

"And does he really consider him a saint?" asked Lóris-Mélikov.

"If he were not a saint the people would not listen to him," said Gamzálo rapidly.

"Shamil is no saint, but Mansúr was!" replied Khan Mahomá. "He was a real saint. When he was Imam the people were quite different. He used to ride through the *aouls*, and the people used to come out and kiss the hem of his coat and confess their sins and vow to do no evil. Then all the people—so the old men say—lived like saints: not drinking, nor smoking, nor neglecting their prayers, and forgiving one another their sins, even when blood had been spilt. If anyone then found money or anything, he tied it to a stake and set it up by the roadside. In those days God gave the people success in everything—not as now."

"In the mountains they don't smoke or drink now," said Gamzálo.

"Your Shamil is a *lámorey*," said Khan Mahomá, winking at Lóris-

Mélikov. (*Lámorey* was a contemptuous term for a mountaineer.)

"Yes, *lámorey* means mountaineer," replied Gamzálo. "It is in the mountains that the eagles dwell."

"Smart fellow! Well hit!" said Khan Mahomá with a grin, pleased at his adversary's apt retort.

Seeing the silver cigarette-case in Lóris-Mélikov's hand, Khan Mahomá asked for a cigarette; and when Lóris-Mélikov remarked that they were forbidden to smoke, he winked with one eye and jerking his head in the direction of Hadji Murád's bedroom replied that they could do it as long as they were not seen. He at once began smoking—not inhaling—and pouting his red lips awkwardly as he blew out the smoke.

"That is wrong!" said Gamzálo severely, and left the room for a time.

Khan Mahomá winked after him, and, while smoking, asked Lóris-Mélikov where he could best buy a silk *beshmét* and a white cap.

"Why; has thou so much money?"

"I have enough," replied Khan Mahomá with a wink.

"Ask him where he got the money," said Eldár, turning his handsome smiling face towards Lóris-Mélikov.

"Oh, I won it!" said Khan Mahomá quickly; and related how, while walking in Tiflis the day before, he had come upon a group of men—Russians and Armenians—playing at *orlyánka* (a kind of heads-and-tails). The stake was a large one: three gold pieces and much silver. Khan Mahomá at once saw what the game consisted in, and, jingling the coppers he had in his pocket, he went up to the players and said he would stake the whole amount.

"How couldst thou do it? Hadst thou so much?" asked Lóris-Mélikov.

"I had only twelve kopecks," said Khan Mahomá, grinning.

"But if thou hadst lost?"

"Why, this!" said Khan Mahomá pointing to his pistol.

"Wouldst thou have given that?"

"Why give it? I should have run away, and if anyone had tried to stop me I should have killed him—that's all!"

"Well, and didst thou win?"

"Aye, I won it all and went away!"

Lóris-Mélikov quite understood what sort of men Khan Mahomá and Eldár were. Khan Mahomá was a merry fellow, careless and ready for any spree. He did not know what to do with his superfluous vitality. He was always gay and reckless, and played with his own and other

people's lives. For the sake of that sport with life he had now come over to the Russians, and for the same sport he might go back to Shamil tomorrow.

Eldár was also quite easy to understand. He was a man entirely devoted to his *Murshíd*; calm, strong, and firm.

The red-haired Gamzálo was the only one Lóris-Mélikov did not understand. He saw that that man was not only loyal to Shamil, but felt an insuperable aversion, contempt, repugnance, and hatred for all Russians; and Lóris-Mélikov could therefore not understand why he had come over to them. It occurred to him that, as some of the higher officials suspected, Hadji Murád's surrender, and his tales of hatred of Shamil, might be a fraud; and that perhaps he had surrendered only to spy out the Russians' weak spots, that—after escaping back to the mountains—he might be able to direct his forces accordingly. Gamzálo's whole person strengthened this suspicion.

"The others, and Hadji Murád himself, know how to hide their intentions, but this one betrays them by his open hatred," thought he.

Lóris-Mélikov tried to speak to him. He asked whether he did not feel dull. "No, I don't!" he growled hoarsely without stopping his work, and glancing at his questioner out of the corner of his one eye. He replied to all Lóris-Mélikov's other questions in a similar manner.

While Lóris-Mélikov was in the room, Hadji Murád's fourth *murid*, the Avar Khanéfi, came in; a man with a hairy face and neck, and a vaulted chest as rough as though overgrown with moss. He was strong, and a hard worker; always engrossed in his duties, and, like Eldár, unquestioningly obedient to his master.

When he entered the room to fetch some rice, Lóris-Mélikov stopped him and asked where he came from, and how long he had been with Hadji Murád.

"Five years," replied Khanéfi. "I come from the same *aoul* as he. My father killed his uncle, and they wished to kill me," he said calmly, looking from under his joined eyebrows straight into Lóris-Mélikov's face. "Then I asked them to adopt me as a brother."

"What do you mean by 'adopt as a brother'?"

"I did not shave my head nor cut my nails for two months, and then I came to them. They let me in to Patimát, his mother, and she gave me the breast and I became his brother."

Hadji Murád's voice could be heard from the next room and Eldár, immediately answering his call, promptly wiped his hands and went with large strides into the drawing room.

"He asks thee to come," said he, coming back.

Lóris-Mélikov gave another cigarette to the merry Khan Mahomá, and went into the drawing room.

XIII

When Lóris-Mélikov entered the drawing room Hadji Murád received him with a bright face.

"Well, shall I continue?" he asked, sitting down comfortably on the divan.

"Yes, certainly," said Lóris-Mélikov. "I have been in to have a talk with thy henchmen. … One is a jolly fellow!" he added.

"Yes, Khan Mahomá is a frivolous fellow," said Hadji Murád.

"I liked the young handsome one."

"Ah, that's Eldár. He's young, but firm—made of iron!"

They were silent for a while.

"So I am to go on?"

"Yes, yes!"

"I told thee how the Khans were killed. … Well, having killed them, Hamzád rode into Khunzákh and took up his quarters in their palace. The Khansha was the only one of the family left alive. Hamzád sent for her. She reproached him, so he winked to his *murid*, Aseldár, who struck her from behind and killed her."

"Why did he kill her?" asked Lóris-Mélikov.

"What could he do? … Where the forelegs have gone, the hind legs must follow! He killed off the whole family. Shamil killed the youngest son—threw him over a precipice. …

"Then the whole of Avaria surrendered to Hamzád. But my brother and I would not surrender. We wanted his blood for the blood of the Khans. We pretended to yield, but our only thought was how to get his blood. We consulted our grandfather, and decided to await the time when he would come out of his palace, and then to kill him from an ambush. Someone overheard us and told Hamzád, who sent for grandfather and said, 'Mind, if it be true that thy grandsons are planning evil against me, thou and they shall hang from one rafter. I do God's work and cannot be hindered. … Go, and remember what I have said!'

"Our grandfather came home and told us.

"Then we decided not to wait, but to do the deed on the first day of the feast in the mosque. Our comrades would not take part in it, but my brother and I remained firm.

"We took two pistols each, put on our burkas, and went to the mosque. Hamzád entered the mosque with thirty *murids*. They all had drawn swords in their hands. Aseldár, his favorite *murid* (the one who had cut off the head of the Khansha), saw us, shouted to us to take off our burkas, and came towards me. I had my dagger in my hand, and I killed him with it and rushed at Hamzád; but my brother Osman had already shot him. He was still alive, and rushed at my brother dagger in hand, but I gave him a finishing blow on the head. There were thirty *murids*, and we were only two. They killed my brother Osman, but I kept them at bay, leapt through the window, and escaped.

"When it was known that Hamzád had been killed all the people rose. The *murids* fled; and those of them who did not flee were killed."

Hadji Murád paused, and breathed heavily.

"That was all very well," he continued, "but afterwards everything was spoilt.

"Shamil succeeded Hamzád. He sent envoys to me to say that I should join him in attacking the Russians, and that if I refused he would destroy Kunzákh and kill me.

"I answered that I would not join him, and would not let him come to me. …"

"Why didst thou not go with him?" asked Lóris-Mélikov.

Hadji Murád frowned, and did not reply at once.

"I could not. The blood of my brother Osman and of Abu Nutsal Khan was on his hands. I did not go to him. General Rosen sent me an officer's commission, and ordered me to govern Avaria. All this would have been well, but that Rosen appointed as Khan of Kazi-Kumúkh, first Mahómet-Murza, and afterwards Akhmet Khan, who hated me. He had been trying to get the Khansha's daughter, Sultanetta, in marriage for his son, but she would not give her to him, and he believed me to be the cause of this. … Yes, Akhmet Khan hated me and sent his henchmen to kill me, but I escaped from them. Then he calumniated me to General Klügenau. He said that I told the Avars not to supply wood to the Russian soldiers; and he also said that I had donned a turban—this one—" and Hadji Murád touched his turban—"and that this meant that I had gone over to Shamil. The General did not believe him, and gave orders that I should not be touched. But when the General went to Tiflis, Akhmet Khan did as he pleased. He sent a company of soldiers to seize me, put me in chains, and tied me to a cannon.

"So they kept me six days," he continued. "On the seventh day

they untied me and started to take me to Temir-Khan-Shurá. Forty soldiers with loaded guns had me in charge. My hands were tied, and I knew that they had orders to kill me if I tried to escape.

"As we approached Mansooha the path became narrow, and on the right was an abyss about a hundred and twenty yards deep. I went to the right—to the very edge. A soldier wanted to stop me, but I jumped down and pulled him with me. He was killed outright, but I, as you see, remained alive.

"Ribs, head, arms, and leg—all were broken! I tried to crawl, but grew giddy and fell asleep. I awoke, wet with blood. A shepherd saw me, and called some people who carried me to an *aoul*. My ribs and head healed, and my leg too, only it has remained short," and Hadji Murád stretched out his crooked leg. "It still serves me, however, and that is well," said he.

"The people heard the news, and began coming to me. I recovered, and went to Tselméss. The Avars again called on me to rule over them," said Hadji Murád, with tranquil, confident pride, "and I agreed."

He quickly rose, and taking a portfolio out of a saddlebag, drew out two discolored letters and handed one of them to Lóris-Mélikov. They were from General Klügenau. Lóris-Mélikov read the first letter, which was as follows:

> "Lieutenant Hadji Murád, thou has served under me, and I was satisfied with thee, and considered thee a good man.
>
> "Recently Akhmet Khan informed me that thou are a traitor, that thou has donned a turban and hast intercourse with Shamil, and that thou has taught the people to disobey the Russian Government. I ordered thee to be arrested and brought before me, but thou fledst. I do not know whether this is for thy good or not, as I do not know whether thou art guilty or not.
>
> "Now hear me. If thy conscience is pure, if thou are not guilty in anything towards the great Tsar, come to me; fear no one. I am thy defender. The Khan can do nothing to thee; he is himself under my command, so thou hast nothing to fear."

Klügenau added that he always kept his word and was just, and he again exhorted Hadji Murád to appear before him.

When Lóris-Mélikov had read this letter, Hadji Murád, before handing him the second one, told him what he had written in reply to the first.

"I wrote that I wore a turban, not for Shamil's sake but for my soul's salvation; that I neither wished nor could go over to Shamil, because he was the cause of my father's, my brothers', and my relations' deaths; but that I could not join the Russians because I had been dishonored by them. (In Khunzákh, while I was bound, a scoundrel sh—— on me; and I could not join your people until that man was killed.) But, above all, I feared that liar, Akhmet Khan.

"Then the General sent me this letter," said Hadji Murád, handing Lóris-Mélikov the other discolored paper.

> "Thou has answered my first letter, and I thank thee," read Lóris-Mélikov. "Thou writest that thou are not afraid to return, but that the insult done thee by a certain Giaour prevents it; but I assure thee that the Russian law is just, and that thou shalt see him who dared to offend thee punished before thine eyes. I have already given orders to investigate the matter.
>
> "Hear me, Hadji Murád! I have a right to be displeased with thee for not trusting me and my honor; but I forgive thee, for I know how suspicious mountaineers are in general. If thy conscience is pure, if thou hast put on a turban only for thy soul's salvation, then thou art right, and mayst look me and the Russian Government boldly in the eyes. He who dishonored thee shall, I assure thee, be punished; and *thy property shall be restored to thee*, and thou shalt see and know what Russian law is. And besides, we Russians look at things differently, and thou hast not sunk in our eyes because some scoundrel has dishonored thee.
>
> "I myself have consented to the Chimrints wearing turbans; and I regard their actions in the right light, and therefore I repeat that thou hast nothing to fear. Come to me with the man by whom I am sending thee this letter. He is faithful to me, and is not the slave of thy enemies, but is the friend of a man who enjoys the special favor of the Government."

Further on Klügenau again tried to persuade Hadji Murád to come over to him.

"I did not believe him," said Hadji Murád when Lóris-Mélikov had finished reading, "and did not go to Klügenau. The chief thing for me was to revenge myself on Akhmet Khan; and that I could not do through the Russians. Then Akhmet Khan surrounded Tselméss, and wanted to take me or kill me. I had too few men, and could not drive him off; and just then came an envoy with a letter from Shamil, promising to help me to defeat and kill Akhmet Khan, and making me ruler over the whole of Avaria. I considered the matter for a long time, and then went over to Shamil; and from that time I have fought the Russians continually."

Here Hadji Murád related all his military exploits, of which there were very many, and some of which were already familiar to Lóris-Mélikov. All his campaigns and raids had been remarkable for the extraordinary rapidity of his movements and the boldness of his attacks, which were always crowned with success.

"There never was any friendship between me and Shamil," said Hadji Murád at the end of his story, "but he feared me and needed me. But it so happened that I was asked who should be Imam after Shamil, and I replied: 'He will be Imam whose sword is sharpest!'

"This was told to Shamil, and he wanted to get rid of me. He sent me into Tabasarán. I went, and captured a thousand sheep and three hundred horses; but he said I had not done the right thing, and dismissed me from being *naïb*, and ordered me to send him all the money. I sent him a thousand gold pieces. He sent his *murids*, and they took from me all my property. He demanded that I should go to him; but I knew he wanted to kill me, and I did not go. Then he sent to take me. I resisted, and went over to Vorontsóv. Only I did not take my family. My mother, my wives, and my son are in his hands. Tell the Sirdar that as long as my family is in Shamil's power, I can do nothing."

"I will tell him," said Lóris-Mélikov.

"Take pains, do try! … What is mine is thine, only help me with the Prince! I am tied up, and the end of the rope is in Shamil's hands," said Hadji Murád concluding his story.

XIV

On the 20th of December Vorontsóv wrote as follows to Chernyshóv, the Minister of War. The letter was in French:

"I did not write to you by the last post, dear Prince, as I wished

first to decide what we should do with Hadji Murád, and for the last two or three days I have not been feeling quite well.

"In my last letter I informed you of Hadji Murád's arrival here. He reached Tiflis on the 8th, and next day I made his acquaintance; and during the following seven or eight days have spoken to him and considered what use we can make of him in the future, and especially what we are to do with him at present; for he is much concerned about the fate of his family, and with every appearance of perfect frankness says that while they are in Shamil's hands he is paralysed and cannot render us any service, or show his gratitude for the friendly reception and forgiveness we have extended to him.

"His uncertainty about those dear to him makes him feverish; and the persons I have appointed to live with him assure me that he does not sleep at night, eats hardly anything, prays continually, and asks only to be allowed to ride out accompanied by several Cossacks—the sole recreation and exercise possible for him, and made necessary to him by lifelong habit. Every day he comes to me to know whether I have any news of his family, and to ask me to have all the prisoners in our hands collected and offered to Shamil in exchange for them. He would also give a little money. There are people who would let him have some for the purpose. He keeps repeating to me: 'Save my family, and then give me a chance to serve you' (preferably, in his opinion, on the Lesghian line), 'and if within a month I do not render you great service, punish me as you think fit.' I reply that to me all this appears very just; and that many among us would even not trust him so long as his family remains in the mountains and are not in our hands as hostages; and that I will do everything possible to collect the prisoners on our frontier; that I have no power under our laws to give him money for the ransom of his family in addition to the sum he may himself be able to raise, but that I may perhaps find some other means of helping him. After that I told him frankly that in my opinion Shamil would not in any case give up the family, and that Shamil might tell him so straight out and promise him a full pardon and his former posts, but threaten, if Hadji Murád did not return, to kill his mother, his wives, and his six children; and I asked him whether he could say frankly what he would do if he received such an announcement from Shamil. Hadji Murád lifted his eyes and arms to heaven, and said that everything is in God's hands, but that he would never surrender to his foe; for he is certain Shamil would not forgive him, and he would therefore not have long to live. As to the destruction of his family, he did not think Shamil would act so rashly: firstly, to avoid

making him a yet more desperate and dangerous foe; and secondly, because there were many people, and even very influential people, in Daghestan, who would dissuade Shamil from such a course. Finally, he repeated several times that whatever God might decree for him in the future, he was at present interested in nothing but his family's ransom; and he implored me, in God's name, to help him, and allow him to return to the neighborhood of the Chechnya, where he could, with the help and consent of our commanders, have some intercourse with his family, and regular news of their condition, and of the best means to liberate them. He said that many people, and even some *naïbs* in that part of the enemy's territory, were more or less attached to him; and that among the whole of the population already subjugated by Russia, or neutral, it would be easy with our help to establish relations very useful for the attainment of the aim which gives him no peace day or night, and the attainment of which would set him at ease and make it possible for him to act for our good and win our confidence.

"He asks to be sent back to Grózny with a convoy of twenty or thirty picked Cossacks, who would serve him as a protection against foes and us as a guarantee of his good faith.

"You will understand, dear Prince, that I have been much perplexed by all this; for, do what I will, a great responsibility rests on me. It would be in the highest degree rash to trust him entirely; yet in order to deprive him of all means of escape we should have to lock him up, and in my opinion that would be both unjust and impolitic. A measure of that kind, the news of which would soon spread over the whole of Daghestan, would do us great harm by keeping back those (and there are many such) who are now inclined more or less openly to oppose Shamil, and who are keenly watching to see how we treat the Imam's bravest and most adventurous officer, now that he has found himself obliged to place himself in our hands. If we treat Hadji Murád as a prisoner, all the good effect of the situation will be lost. Therefore I think that I could not act otherwise than as I have done, though at the same time I feel that I may be accused of having made a great mistake if Hadji Murád should take it into his head again to escape. In the service, and especially in a complicated situation such as this, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to follow any one straight path without risking mistakes, and without accepting responsibility; but once a path seems to be the right one I must follow it, happen what may.

"I beg of you, dear Prince, to submit this to his Majesty the Emperor for his consideration; and I shall be happy if it pleases our most august monarch to approve my action.

"All that I have written above, I have also written to Generals Zavodóvsky and Kozlóvsky, to guide the latter when communicating direct with Hadji Murád, whom I have warned not to act or go anywhere without Kozlóvsky's consent. I also told him that it would be all the better of us if he rode out with our convoy, as otherwise Shamil might spread a rumor that we were keeping him prisoner; but at the same time I made him promise never to go to Vozdvízhensk, because my son, to whom he first surrendered and whom he looks upon as his *kunák* (friend), is not the commander of that place, and some unpleasant misunderstanding might easily arise. In any case Vozdvízhensk lies too near a thickly populated, hostile settlement; while for the intercourse with his friends which he desires, Grózny is in all respects suitable.

"Besides the twenty chosen Cossacks who, at his own request, are to keep close to him, I am also sending Captain Lóris-Mélikov—a worthy, excellent, and highly intelligent officer who speaks Tartar, and knows Hadji Murád well, and apparently enjoys his full confidence. During the ten days that Hadji Murád has spent here, he has, however, lived in the same house with Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Tarkhánov, who is in command of the Shoushín District, and is here on business connected with the service. He is a truly worthy man whom I trust entirely. He also has won Hadji Murád's confidence, and through him alone—as he speaks Tartar perfectly—we have discussed the most delicate and secret matters. I have consulted Tarkhánov about Hadji Murád, and he fully agrees with me that it was necessary either to act as I have done, or to put Hadji Murád in prison and guard him in the strictest manner (for if we once treat him badly, he will not be easy to hold), or else to remove him from the country altogether. But these two last measures would not only destroy all the advantage accruing to us from Hadji Murád's quarrel with Shamil, but would inevitably check any growth of the present insubordination, and possible future revolt, of the people against Shamil's power. Prince Tarkhánov tells me he himself has no doubt of Hadji Murád's truthfulness, and that Hadji Murád is convinced that Shamil will never forgive him, but would have him executed in spite of any promise of forgiveness. The only thing Tarkhánov has noticed in his intercourse with Hadji Murád that might cause any anxiety, is his attachment to his religion. Tarkhánov does not deny that Shamil might influence Hadji Murád from that side. But as I have already said, he will never persuade Hadji Murád that he will not take his life sooner or later, should the latter return to him.

"This, dear Prince, is all I have to tell you about this episode in

our affairs here."

XV

The report was dispatched from Tiflis on the 24th of December 1851, and on New Year's Eve a courier, having overdriven a dozen horses and beaten a dozen drivers till the blood came, delivered it to Prince Chernyshóv, who at that time was Minister of War; and on the 1st of January 1852 Chernyshóv, among other papers, took Vorontsóv's report to the Emperor Nicholas.

Chernyshóv disliked Vorontsóv because of the general respect in which the latter was held, and because of his immense wealth; and also because Vorontsóv was a real aristocrat, while Chernyshóv, after all, was a parvenu; but especially because the Emperor was particularly well disposed towards Vorontsóv. Therefore at every opportunity Chernyshóv tried to injure Vorontsóv.

When he had last presented the report about Caucasian affairs, he had succeeded in arousing Nicholas's displeasure against Vorontsóv because—through the carelessness of those in command—almost the whole of a small Caucasian detachment had been destroyed by the mountaineers. He now intended to present the steps taken by Vorontsóv in relation to Hadji Murád in an unfavorable light. He wished to suggest to the Emperor that Vorontsóv always protected and even indulged the natives, to the detriment of the Russians, and that he had acted unwisely in allowing Hadji Murád to remain in the Caucasus, for there was every reason to suspect that he had only come over to spy on our means of defense; and that it would therefore be better to transport him to Central Russia, and make use of him only after his family had been rescued from the mountaineers and it had become possible to convince ourselves of his loyalty.

Chernyshóv's plan did not succeed, merely because on that New Year's Day Nicholas was in particularly bad spirits, and out of perversity would not have accepted any suggestion whatever from anyone, least of all from Chernyshóv, whom he only tolerated—regarding him as indispensable for the time being, but looking upon him as a blackguard; for Nicholas knew of his endeavors at the trial of the Decembrists[70] to secure the conviction of Zachary Chernyshóv and of

[70]The military conspirators who tried to secure a constitution for Russia in 1825, on the accession of Nicholas I. —*A. M.*

his attempt to obtain Zachary's property for himself. So, thanks to Nicholas's ill temper, Hadji Murád remained in the Caucasus; and his circumstances were not changed as they might have been had Chernyshóv presented his report at another time.

It was half-past nine o'clock when, through the mist of the cold morning (the thermometer showed 13 degrees below zero Fahrenheit) Chernyshóv's fat, bearded coachman, sitting on the box of a small sledge (like the one Nicholas drove about in) with a sharp-angled, cushion-shaped azure velvet cap on his head, drew up at the entrance of the Winter Palace, and gave a friendly nod to his chum, Prince Dolgorúky's coachman—who, having brought his master to the palace, had himself long been waiting outside, in his big coat with the thickly wadded skirts, sitting on the reins and rubbing his numbed hands together. Chernyshóv had on a long, large-caped cloak, with a fluffy collar of silver beaver, and a regulation three-cornered hat with cocks' feathers. He threw back the bearskin apron of the sledge, and carefully disengaged his chilled feet, on which he had no goloshes (he prided himself on never wearing any). Clanking his spurs with an air of bravado, he ascended the carpeted steps and passed through the hall door, which was respectfully opened for him by the porter, and entered the hall. Having thrown off his cloak, which an old Court lackey hurried forward to take, he went to a mirror and carefully removed the hat from his curled wig. Looking at himself in the mirror, he arranged the hair on his temples and the tuft above his forehead with an accustomed movement of his old hands, and adjusted his cross, the shoulder-knots of his uniform, and his large-initialled epaulets; and then went up the gently-ascending carpeted stairs, his not very reliable old legs feebly mounting the shallow steps. Passing the Court lackeys in gala livery, who stood obsequiously bowing, Chernyshóv entered the waiting-room. A newly appointed aide-de-camp to the Emperor, in a shining new uniform, with epaulets and shoulder-knots and a still fresh rosy face, a small black mustache, and the hair on his temples brushed towards his eyes (Nicholas's fashion) met him respectfully.

Prince Vasíly Dolgorúky, Assistant-Minister of War, with an expression of ennui on his dull face—which was ornamented with similar whiskers, mustaches, and temple tufts brushed forward like Nicholas's—greeted him.

"*L'empereur?*" said Chernyshóv, addressing the aide-de-camp and looking inquiringly towards the door leading to the cabinet.

"*Sa majesté vient de rentrer*,"[71] replied the aide-de-camp, evidently

enjoying the sound of his own voice, and, stepping so softly and steadily that had a tumbler of water been placed on his head none of it would have been spilt, he approached the noiselessly opening door and, his whole body evincing reverence for the spot he was about to visit, disappeared.

Dolgorúky meanwhile opened his portfolio to see that it contained the necessary papers, while Chernyshóv, frowning, paced up and down to restore the circulation in his numbed feet, and thought over what he was about to report to the Emperor. He was near the door of the cabinet when it opened again, and the aide-de-camp, even more radiant and respectful than before, came out and with a gesture invited the minister and his assistant to enter.

The Winter Palace had been rebuilt after a fire some considerable time before this, but Nicholas was still occupying rooms in the upper story. The cabinet in which he received the reports of his ministers and other high officials was a very lofty apartment with four large windows. A big portrait of the Emperor Alexander I hung on the front wall. Between the windows stood two bureaux. By the walls stood several chairs. In the middle of the room was an enormous writing table, with an armchair before it for Nicholas, and other chairs for those to whom he gave audience.

Nicholas sat at the table in a black coat with shoulder-straps but no epaulets, his enormous body—with his overgrown stomach tightly laced in—was thrown back, and he gazed at the newcomers with fixed, lifeless eyes. His long, pale face, with its enormous receding forehead between the tufts of hair which were brushed forward and skillfully joined to the wig that covered his bald patch, was specially cold and stony that day. His eyes, always dim, looked duller than usual; the compressed lips under his upturned mustaches, and his fat freshly shaven cheeks—on which symmetrical sausage-shaped bits of whiskers had been left—supported by the high collar, and his chin which also pressed upon it, gave his face a dissatisfied and even irate expression. The cause of the bad mood he was in was fatigue. The fatigue was due to the fact that he had been to a masquerade the night before, and while walking about as was his wont, in his Horse Guards' uniform with a bird on the helmet, among the public which crowded round and timidly made way for his enormous, self-assured figure, he again met the mask who at the previous masquerade, by her whiteness, her beautiful figure, and her tender voice had aroused his senile sensuality.

[71] "His majesty has just returned."

She had then disappeared, after promising to meet him at the next masquerade.

At yesterday's masquerade she had come up to him, and he had not let her go again, but had led her to the box specially kept ready for that purpose, where he could be alone with her. Having arrived in silence at the door of the box, Nicholas looked round to find the attendant, but he was not there. Nicholas frowned, and pushed the door open himself, letting the lady enter first.

"*Il y a quelqu'un!*"[72] said the mask, stopping short.

The box actually was occupied. On the small velvet-covered sofa, close together, sat an Uhlan officer and a pretty, curly-haired, fair young woman in a domino, who had removed her mask. On catching sight of the angry figure of Nicholas, drawn up to its full height, the fair-haired woman quickly covered her face with her mask, but the Uhlan officer, rigid with fear, without rising from the sofa, gazed at Nicholas with fixed eyes.

Used as he was to the terror he inspired in others, that terror always pleased Nicholas, and by way of contrast he sometimes liked to astound those plunged in terror by addressing kindly words to them. He did so on this occasion.

"Well, friend!" said he to the officer, "You are younger than I, and might give up your place to me."

The officer jumped to his feet, and growing first pale and then red and bending almost double, he followed his partner silently out of the box, leaving Nicholas alone with his lady.

She proved to be a pretty, twenty-year-old virgin, the daughter of a Swedish governess. She told Nicholas how, when quite a child, she had fallen in love with him from his portraits; how she adored him, and made up her mind to attract his attention at any cost. Now she had succeeded, and wanted nothing more—so she said.

The girl was taken to the place where Nicholas usually had rendezvous with women, and there he spent more than an hour with her.

When he returned to his room that night and lay on the hard narrow bed about which he prided himself, and covered himself with the cloak which he considered to be (and spoke of as being) as famous as Napoleon's hat, it was a long time before he could fall asleep. He thought now of the frightened and elated expression on that girl's fair face, and now of the full, powerful shoulders of his established mistress, Nelídova, and he compared the two. That profligacy in a married man

[72] "There's someone there!"

was a bad thing did not once enter his head; and he would have been greatly surprised had anyone censured him for it. Yet, though convinced that he had acted properly, some kind of unpleasant aftertaste remained behind, and to stifle that feeling he dwelt on a thought that always tranquilized him—the thought of his own greatness.

Though he fell asleep very late, he rose before eight, and after attending to his toilet in the usual way—rubbing his big well-fed body all over with ice—and saying his prayers (repeating those he had been used to from childhood—the prayer to the Virgin, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, without attaching any kind of meaning to the words he uttered), he went out through the smaller portico of the palace on to the embankment, in his military cloak and cap.

On the embankment he met a student in the uniform of the School of Jurisprudence, who was as enormous as himself. On recognizing the uniform of that school, which he disliked for its freedom of thought, Nicholas frowned; but the stature of the student and the painstaking manner in which he drew himself up and saluted, ostentatiously sticking out his elbow, mollified Nicholas's displeasure.

"Your name?" said he.

"Polosátov, your Imperial Majesty."

"… fine fellow!"

The student continued to stand with his hand lifted to his hat.

Nicholas stopped.

"Do you wish to enter the army?"

"Not at all, your Imperial Majesty."

"Blockhead!" And Nicholas turned away and continued his walk, and began uttering aloud the first words that came into his head.

"Kopervine … Kopervine—" he repeated several times (it was the name of yesterday's girl). "Horrid … horrid—" He did not think of what he said, but stifled his feelings by listening to it.

"Yes, what would Russia do without me?" said he, feeling his former dissatisfaction returning; "yes, what would—not Russia alone but Europe be, without me?" and calling to mind the weakness and stupidity of his brother-in-law, the King of Prussia, he shook his head.

As he was returning to the small portico, he saw the carriage of Helena Pávlovna,[73] with a red-liveried footman, approaching the Saltykóv entrance of the palace.

Helena Pávlovna was to him the personification of that futile class

[73]Widow of Nicholas's brother Michael; a clever, well-educated woman, interested in science, art, and public affairs. —*A. M.*

of people who discussed not merely science and poetry, but even the ways of governing men: imagining that they could govern themselves better than he, Nicholas, governed them! He knew that however much he crushed such people, they reappeared again and again, and he recalled his brother, Michael Pávlovich, who had died not long before. A feeling of sadness and vexation came over him, and with a dark frown he again began whispering the first words that came into his head. He only ceased doing this when he reentered the palace.

On reaching his apartments he smoothed his whiskers and the hair on his temples and the wig on his bald patch, and twisted his mustaches upwards in front of the mirror; and then went straight to the cabinet in which he received reports.

He first received Chernyshóv, who at once saw by his face, and especially by his eyes, that Nicholas was in a particularly bad humor that day; and knowing about the adventure of the night before, he understood the cause. Having coldly greeted Chernyshóv and invited him to sit down, Nicholas fixed on him a lifeless gaze. The first matter Chernyshóv reported upon was a case, which had just been discovered, of embezzlement by commissariat officials; the next was the movement of troops on the Prussian frontier; then came a list of rewards to be given at the New Year to some people omitted from a former list; then Vorontsóv's report about Hadji Murád; and lastly some unpleasant business concerning an attempt by a student of the Academy of Medicine on the life of a professor.

Nicholas heard the report of the embezzlement silently, with compressed lips, his large white hand—with one ring on the fourth finger—stroking some sheets of paper, and his eyes steadily fixed on Chernyshóv's forehead and on the tuft of hair above it.

Nicholas was convinced that everybody stole. He knew he would have to punish the commissariat officials now, and decided to send them all to serve in the ranks; but he also knew that this would not prevent those who succeeded them from acting in the same way. It was a characteristic of officials to steal, but it was his duty to punish them for doing so; and tired as he was of that duty he conscientiously performed it.

"It seems there is only one honest man in Russia!" said he.

Chernyshóv at once understood that this one honest man was Nicholas himself, and smiled approvingly.

"It looks like it, your Imperial Majesty," said he.

"Leave it—I will give a decision," said Nicholas, taking the document and putting it on the left side of the table.

Then Chernyshóv reported the rewards to be given, and about moving the army on the Prussian frontier.

Nicholas looked over the list and struck out some names; and then briefly and firmly gave orders to move two divisions to the Prussian frontier. Nicholas could not forgive the King of Prussia for granting a Constitution to his people after the events of 1848, and therefore, while expressing most friendly feelings to his brother-in-law in letters and conversation, he considered it necessary to keep an army near the frontier in case of need. He might want to use these troops to defend his brother-in-law's throne if the people of Prussia rebelled (Nicholas saw a readiness for rebellion everywhere) as he had used troops to suppress the rising in Hungary a few years previously. They were also of use to give more weight and influence to such advice as he gave to the King of Prussia.

"Yes—what would Russia be like now if it were not for me?" he again thought.

"Well, what else is there?" said he.

"A courier from the Caucasus," said Chernyshóv, and he reported what Vorontsóv had written about Hadji Murád's surrender.

"Dear me!" said Nicholas. "Well, it's a good beginning!"

"Evidently the plan devised by your Majesty begins to bear fruit," said Chernyshóv.

This approval of his strategic talents was particularly pleasant to Nicholas because, though he prided himself upon those talents, at the bottom of his heart he knew that they did not really exist; and he now desired to hear more detailed praise of himself.

"How do you mean?" he asked.

"I understand it this way—that if your Majesty's plans had been adopted long ago, and we had moved forward steadily though slowly, cutting down forests and destroying the supplies of food, the Caucasus would have been subjugated long ago. I attribute Hadji Murád's surrender entirely to his having come to the conclusion that they can hold out no longer."

"True," said Nicholas.

Although the plan of a gradual advance into the enemy's territory by means of felling forests and destroying the food supplies was Ermolóv's and Velyamínov's plan, and was quite contrary to Nicholas's own plan of seizing Shamil's place of residence and destroying that nest of robbers—which was the plan on which the dargo expedition in 1845 (that cost so many lives) had been undertaken—Nicholas nevertheless attributed to himself also the plan of a slow advance and a systematic

felling of forests and devastation of the country. It would seem that to believe the plan of a slow movement by felling forests and destroying food supplies was his own, necessitated the hiding the fact that he had insisted on quite contrary operations in 1845. But he did not hide it, and was proud of the plan of the 1845 expedition, and also of the plan of a slow advance—though the two were obviously contrary to one another. Continual brazen flattery from everybody round him in the teeth of obvious facts, had brought him to such a state that he no longer saw his own inconsistencies or measured his actions and words by reality, logic, or even simple common sense; but was quite convinced that all his orders, however senseless, unjust, and mutually contradictory they might be, became reasonable, just, and mutually accordant simply because he gave them. His decision in the case next reported to him—that of the student of the Academy of Medicine—was of that senseless kind.

The case was as follows: A young man who had twice failed in his examinations was being examined a third time, and when the examiner again would not pass him, the young man, whose nerves were deranged, considering this to be an injustice, in a paroxysm of fury seized a penknife from the table and, rushing at the professor, inflicted on him several trifling wounds.

"What's his name?" asked Nicholas.

"Bzhezóvski."

"A Pole?"

"Of Polish descent and a Roman Catholic," answered Chernyshóv.

Nicholas frowned. He had done much evil to the Poles. To justify that evil he had to feel certain that all Poles were rascals, and hated them accordingly in proportion to the evil he had done to them.

"Wait a little," he said, closing his eyes and bowing his head.

Chernyshóv, having more than once heard Nicholas say so, knew that when the Emperor had to take a decision, it was only necessary for him to concentrate his attention for a few moments, and the spirit moved him, and the best possible decision presented itself, as though an inner voice had told him what to do. He was now thinking how most fully to satisfy the feeling of hatred against the Poles which this incident had stirred up within him; and the inner voice suggested the following decision. He took the report and in his large handwriting wrote on its margin with three orthographical mistakes:

> "Diserves deth, but, thank God, we have no capitle punishment, and it is not for me to introduce it. Make him run

the gauntlet of a thousand men twelve times. —Nicholas."

He signed, adding his unnaturally huge flourish.

Nicholas knew that twelve thousand strokes with the regulation rods were not only certain death with torture, but were a superfluous cruelty, for five thousand strokes were sufficient to kill the strongest man. But it pleased him to be ruthlessly cruel, and it also pleased him to think that we have abolished capital punishment in Russia.

Having written his decision about the student, he pushed it across to Chernyshóv.

"There," he said, "read it."

Chernyshóv read it, and bowed his head as a sign of respectful amazement at the wisdom of the decision.

"Yes, and let all the students be present on the drill-ground at the punishment," added Nicholas.

"It will do them good! I will abolish this revolutionary spirit, and will tear it up by the roots!" he thought.

"It shall be done," replied Chernyshóv; and after a short pause he straightened the tuft on his forehead and returned to the Caucasian report.

"What do you command me to write in reply to Prince Vorontsóv's dispatch?"

"To keep firmly to my system of destroying the dwellings and food supplies in Chechnya, and to harass them by raids," answered Nicholas.

"And what are your Majesty's commands with reference to Hadji Murád?" asked Chernyshóv.

"Well, Vorontsóv writes that he wants to make use of him in the Caucasus."

"Is it not dangerous?" said Chernyshóv, avoiding Nicholas's gaze. "Prince Vorontsóv is, I'm afraid, too confiding."

"And you—what do you think?" asked Nicholas sharply, detecting Chernyshóv's intention of presenting Vorontsóv's decision in an unfavorable light.

"Well, I should have thought it would be safer to deport him to Central Russia."

"You would have thought!" said Nicholas ironically. "But I don't think so, and agree with Vorontsóv. Write to him accordingly."

"It shall be done," said Chernyshóv, rising and bowing himself out.

Dolgorúky also bowed himself out, having during the whole audience only uttered a few words (in reply to a question from Nicholas) about the movement of the army.

After Chernyshóv, Nicholas received Bíbikov, General-Governor of the Western Provinces. Having expressed his approval of the measures taken by Bíbikov against the mutinous peasants who did not wish to accept the orthodox Faith, he ordered him to have all those who did not submit tried by court-martial. That was equivalent to sentencing them to run the gauntlet. He also ordered the editor of a newspaper to be sent to serve in the ranks of the army for publishing information about the transfer of several thousand State peasants to the imperial estates.

"I do this because I consider it necessary," said Nicholas, "and I will not allow it to be discussed."

Bíbikov saw the cruelty of the order concerning the Uniate[74] peasants, and the injustice of transferring State peasants (the only free peasants in Russia in those days) to the Crown, which meant making them serfs of the Imperial family. But it was impossible to express dissent. Not to agree with Nicholas's decisions would have meant the loss of that brilliant position which it had cost Bíbikov forty years to attain and which he now enjoyed; and he therefore submissively bowed his dark head (already touched with grey) to indicate his submission and his readiness to fulfil the cruel, insensate, and dishonest supreme will.

Having dismissed Bíbikov, Nicholas, with a sense of duty well fulfilled, stretched himself, glanced at the clock, and went to get ready to go out. Having put on a uniform with epaulets, orders, and a ribbon, he went out into the reception hall, where more than a hundred persons—men in uniforms and women in elegant low-necked dresses, all standing in the places assigned to them—awaited his arrival with agitation.

He came out to them with a lifeless look in his eyes, his chest expanded, his stomach bulging out above and below its bandages; and feeling everybody's gaze tremulously and obsequiously fixed upon him, he assumed an even more triumphant air. When his eyes met those of people he knew, remembering who was who, he stopped and addressed a few words to them, sometimes in Russian and sometimes in French, and transfixing them with his cold glassy eye, listened to what they said.

Having received all the New Year congratulations, he passed on to church, where God, through His servants the priests, greeted and

[74]The Uniates acknowledge the Pope in Rome, though in other respects they are in accord with the Orthodox Russo-Greek Church. —*A. M.*

praised Nicholas just as worldly people did; and weary as he was of these greetings and praises, Nicholas duly accepted them. All this was as it should be, because the welfare and happiness of the whole world depended on him; and though the matter wearied him, he still did not refuse the universe his assistance.

When at the end of the service the magnificently arrayed deacon, his long hair crimped and carefully combed, began the chant "Many Years," which was heartily caught up by the splendid choir, Nicholas looked round and noticed Nelídova, with her fine shoulders, standing by a window, and he decided the comparison with yesterday's girl in her favor.

After Mass he went to the Empress and spent a few minutes in the bosom of his family, joking with the children and his wife. Then, passing through the Hermitage,[75] he visited the Minister of the Court, Volkónski, and among other things ordered him to pay out of a special fund a yearly pension to the mother of yesterday's girl. From there he went for his customary drive.

Dinner that day was served in the Pompeian Hall. Besides the younger sons of Nicholas and Michael, there were also invited Baron Lieven, Count Rjévski, Dolgorúky, the Prussian Ambassador, and the King of Prussia's aide-de-camp.

While waiting for the appearance of the Emperor and Empress, an interesting conversation took place between Baron Lieven and the Prussian Ambassador concerning the disquieting news from Poland.

"*La Pologne et le Caucases, ce sont les deux cautères de la Russie*,"[76] said Lieven. "*Il nous faut dent mille hommes à peu près, dans chaqu'un de ces deux pays.*"

The Ambassador expressed a fictitious surprise that it should be so.

"*Vous dites, la Pologne—*"[77] began the Ambassador.

"*Oh, oui, c'était un coup de maître de Metternich, de nous en avoir laissé l'embarras. …*"

At this point the Empress, with her trembling head and fixed smile, entered followed by Nicholas.

At dinner Nicholas spoke of Hadji Murád's surrender, and said that

[75] A celebrated museum and picture gallery in St. Petersburg, adjoining the Winter Palace. —*A. M.*

[76] "Poland and the Caucasus are Russia's two sores. We need about 100,000 men in each of those two countries."

[77] "You say that Poland—" "Oh yes, it was a masterstroke of Metternich's to leave us the bother of it. …"

the war in the Caucasus must now soon come to an end in consequence of the measures he was taking to limit the scope of the mountaineers, by felling their forests and by his system of erecting a series of small forts.

The Ambassador, having exchanged a rapid glance with the aide-de-camp—to whom he had only that morning spoken about Nicholas's unfortunate weakness for considering himself a great strategist—warmly praised this plan, which once more demonstrated Nicholas's great strategic ability.

After dinner Nicholas drove to the ballet, where hundreds of women marched round in tights and scanty clothing. One of them specially attracted him, and he had the German ballet-master sent for, and gave orders that a diamond ring should be presented to her.

The next day, when Chernyshóv came with his report, Nicholas again confirmed his order to Vorontsóv—that now that Hadji Murád had surrendered, the Chechens should be more actively harassed than ever, and the cordon round them tightened.

Chernyshóv wrote in that sense to Vorontsóv; and another courier, overdriving more horses and bruising the faces of more drivers, galloped to Tiflis.

XVI

In obedience to this command of Nicholas, a raid was immediately made in Chechnya that same month, January 1852.

The detachment ordered for the raid consisted of four infantry battalions, two companies of Cossacks, and eight guns. The column marched along the road, and on both sides of it in a continuous line, now mounting, now descending, marched *Jägers* in high boots, sheepskin coats, and tall caps, with rifles on their shoulders and cartridges in their belts.

As usual when marching through a hostile country, silence was observed as far as possible. Only occasionally the guns jingled, jolting across a ditch, or an artillery horse, not understanding that silence was ordered, snorted or neighed, or an angry commander shouted in a hoarse subdued voice to his subordinates that the line was spreading out too much, or marching too near or too far from the column. Only once was the silence broken, when, from a bramble patch between the line and the column, a gazelle with a white breast and grey back jumped out, followed by a buck of the same color with small backward-

curving horns. Doubling up their forelegs at each big bound they took, the beautiful and timid creatures came so close to the column that some of the soldiers rushed after them, laughing and shouting, intending to bayonet them, but the gazelles turned back, slipped through the line of *Jägers*, and, pursued by a few horsemen and the company's dogs, fled like birds to the mountains.

It was still winter, but towards noon, when the column (which had started early in the morning) had gone three miles, the sun had risen high enough and was powerful enough to make the men quite hot, and its rays were so bright that it was painful to look at the shining steel of the bayonets, or at the reflections—like little suns—on the brass of the cannons.

The clear and rapid stream the detachment had just crossed lay behind, and in front were tilled fields and meadows in shallow valleys. Farther in front were the dark mysterious forest-clad hills with crags rising beyond them, and farther still, on the lofty horizon, were the ever-beautiful ever-changing snowy peaks that played with the light like diamonds.

In a black coat and tall cap, shouldering his sword, at the head of the 5th Company marched Butler, a tall handsome officer who had recently exchanged from the Guards. He was filled with a buoyant sense of the joy of living, the danger of death, and a wish for action, and the consciousness of being part of an immense whole directed by a single will. This was the second time he was going into action, and he thought how in a moment they would be fired at, and he would not only not stoop when the shells flew overhead, nor heed the whistle of the bullets, but would carry his head even more erect than before, and would look round at his comrades and the soldiers with smiling eyes, and begin to talk in a perfectly calm voice about quite other matters.

The detachment turned off the good road onto a little-used one that crossed a stubbly maize field, and it was drawing near the forest when—they could not see whence—with an ominous whistle, a shell flew past amid the baggage wagons, and tore up the ground in the field by the roadside.

"It's beginning," said Butler, with a bright smile to a comrade who was walking beside him.

And so it was. After the shell, from under the shelter of the forest a thick crowd of mounted Chechens appeared with banners. In the midst of the crowd could be seen a large green banner, and an old and very farsighted sergeant-major informed the shortsighted Butler that Shamil himself must be there. The horsemen came down the hill

and appeared to the right, at the highest part of the valley nearest the detachment, and began to descend. A little general in a thick black coat and tall cap rode up to Butler's company on his ambler, and ordered him to the right to encounter the descending horsemen. Butler quickly led his company in the direction indicated, but before he reached the valley he heard two cannon shots behind him. He looked round: two clouds of grey smoke had risen above two cannons and were spreading along the valley. The mountaineers' horsemen—who had evidently not expected to meet artillery—retired. Butler's company began firing at them, and the whole ravine was filled with the smoke of powder. Only higher up, above the ravine, could the mountaineers be seen hurriedly retreating, though still firing back at the Cossacks who pursued them. The company followed the mountaineers further, and on the slope of a second ravine came in view of an *aoul*.

Following the Cossacks, Butler and his company entered the *aoul* at a run. None of its inhabitants were there. The soldiers were ordered to burn the corn and the hay, as well as the *sáklyas*, and the whole *aoul* was soon filled with pungent smoke, amid which the soldiers rushed about, dragging out of the *sáklyas* what they could find, and above all catching and shooting the fowls the mountaineers had not been able to take away with them.

The officers sat down at some distance beyond the smoke, and lunched and drank. The Sergeant-Major brought them some honeycombs on a board. There was no sign of any Chechens, and early in the afternoon the order was given to retreat. The companies formed into a column behind the *aoul*, and Butler happened to be in the rearguard. As soon as they started Chechens appeared, and, following the detachment, fired at it.

When the detachment came out into an open space, the mountaineers pursued it no further. Not one of Butler's company had been wounded, and he returned in a most happy and energetic mood. When, after fording the same stream it had crossed in the morning, the detachment spread over the maize fields and the meadows, the singers[78] of each company came forward and songs filled the air.

"Very diff'rent, very diff'rent, *Jägers* are, *Jägers* are!" sang Butler's singers, and his horse stepped merrily to the music. Trezórka, the shaggy grey dog of the company, with his tail curled up, ran in front with an air of responsibility, like a commander. Butler felt buoyant, calm, and joyful. War presented itself to him as consisting only in

[78] Each regiment had a choir of singers. —*A. M.*

his exposing himself to danger and to possible death, thereby gaining rewards and the respect of his comrades here, as well as of his friends in Russia. Strange to say, his imagination never pictured the other aspect of war: the death and wounds of the soldiers, officers, and mountaineers. To retain this poetic conception he even unconsciously avoided looking at the dead and wounded. So that day, when we had three dead and twelve wounded, he passed by a corpse lying on its back, and only saw with one eye the strange position of the waxen hand and a dark red spot on the head, and did not stop to look. The hillsmen appeared to him only as mounted *dzhigíts*, from whom one had to defend oneself.

"You see, my dear sir," said his Major in an interval between two songs, "it's not as it is with you in Petersburg—'Eyes right! Eyes left!' Here we have done our job; and now we go home, and Másha will set a pie and some nice cabbage soup before us. That's life; don't you think so?—Now then! 'As the Dawn Was Breaking'!" he called for his favorite song.

There was no wind, the air was fresh and clear, and so transparent that the snow hills nearly a hundred miles away seemed quite near, and in the intervals between the songs the regular sound of the footsteps and the jingle of the guns was heard as a background on which each song began and ended. The song that was being sung in Butler's company was composed by a cadet in honor of the regiment, and went to a dance tune. The chorus was: "Very diff'rent, very diff'rent, *Jägers* are, *Jägers* are!"

Butler rode beside the officer next in rank above him, Major Petróv, with whom he lived; and he felt he could not be thankful enough to have exchanged from the Guards and come to the Caucasus. His chief reason for exchanging was that he had lost all he had at cards, and was afraid that if he remained there he would be unable to resist playing, though he had nothing more to lose. Now all that was over, his life was quite changed, and was such a pleasant and brave one! He forgot that he was ruined, and forgot his unpaid debts. The Caucasus, the war, the soldiers, the officers—those tipsy, brave, good-natured fellows—and Major Petróv himself, all seemed so delightful that sometimes it appeared too good to be true that he was not in Petersburg—in a room filled with tobacco smoke, turning down the corners of cards[79] and gambling, hating the holder of the bank, and feeling a dull pain in his head—but was really here in this glorious region among these

[79] A way of doubling one's stake at the game of *shtos*. —*A. M.*

brave Caucasians.

The Major and the daughter of a surgeon's orderly, formerly known as Másha, but now generally called by the more respectful name of Márya Dmítrievna, lived together as man and wife. Márya Dmítrievna was a handsome, fair-haired, very freckled, childless woman of thirty. Whatever her past may have been, she was now the Major's faithful companion, and looked after him like a nurse—a very necessary matter, since he often drank himself into oblivion.

When they reached the fort everything happened as the Major had foreseen. Márya Dmítrievna gave him, Butler, and two other officers of the detachment who had been invited, a nourishing and tasty dinner, and the Major ate and drank till he was unable to speak, and then went off to his room to sleep.

Butler, having drunk rather more Chikhír wine than was good for him, went to his bedroom, and hardly had time to undress before, placing his hand under his handsome curly head, he fell into a sound, dreamless, and unbroken sleep.

XVII

The *aoul* which had been destroyed was that in which Hadji Murád had spent the night before he went over to the Russians. Sado, with his family, had left the *aoul* on the approach of the Russian detachment; and when he returned he found his *sáklya* in ruins—the roof fallen in, the door and the posts supporting the penthouse burned, and the interior filthy. His son, the handsome, bright-eyed boy who had gazed with such ecstasy at Hadji Murád, was brought dead to the mosque on a horse covered with a burka. He had been stabbed in the back with a bayonet. The dignified woman who had served Hadji Murád when he was at the house now stood over her son's body, her smock torn in front, her withered old breasts exposed, her hair down; and she dug her nails into her face till it bled, and wailed incessantly. Sado, taking a pickaxe and spade, had gone with his relatives to dig a grave for his son. The old grandfather sat by the wall of the ruined *sáklya*, cutting a stick and gazing stolidly in front of him. He had only just returned from the apiary. The two stacks of hay there had been burnt; the apricot and cherry trees he had planted and reared were broken and scorched; and worse still, all the beehives and bees were burnt. The wailing of the women and the little children who cried with their mothers, mingled with the lowing of the hungry cattle, for whom there was no food. The

bigger children, did not play, but followed their elders with frightened eyes. The fountain was polluted, evidently on purpose, so that the water could not be used. The mosque was polluted in the same way, and the Mullah and his assistants were cleaning it out. No one spoke of hatred of the Russians. The feeling experienced by all the Chechens, from the youngest to the oldest, was stronger than hate. It was not hatred, for they did not regard those Russian dogs as human beings; but it was such repulsion, disgust, and perplexity at the senseless cruelty of these creatures, that the desire to exterminate them—like the desire to exterminate rats, poisonous spiders, or wolves—was as natural an instinct as that of self-preservation.

The inhabitants of the *aoul* were confronted by the choice of remaining there and restoring with frightful effort what had been produced with such labor and had been so lightly and senselessly destroyed, facing every moment the possibility of a repetition of what had happened, or—contrary to their religion and despite the repulsion and contempt they felt—to submit to the Russians. The old men prayed, and unanimously decided to send envoys to Shamil asking him for help. Then they immediately set to work to restore what had been destroyed.

XVIII

On the morning after the raid, not very early, Butler left the house by the back porch, meaning to take a stroll and a breath of fresh air before breakfast, which he usually had with Petróv. The sun had already risen above the hills, and it was painful to look at the brightly lit-up white walls of the houses on the right side of the street; but then, as always, it was cheerful and soothing to look to the left, at the dark receding and ascending forest-clad hills, and at the dim line of snow peaks which as usual pretended to be clouds. Butler looked at these mountains, inhaling deep breaths and rejoicing that he was alive, that it was just he that was alive, and that he lived in this beautiful place.

He was also rather pleased that he had behaved so well in yesterday's affair, both during the advance and especially during the retreat, when things were pretty hot; and he was also pleased to remember how on their return after the raid Másha (or Márya Dmítrievna), Petróv's mistress, had treated them at dinner, and had been particularly nice and simple with everybody, but specially kind—as he thought—to him.

Márya Dmítrievna, with her thick plait of hair, her broad shoulders, her high bosom, and the radiant smile on her kindly freckled face,

involuntarily attracted Butler, who was a strong young bachelor; and it even seemed to him that she wanted him; but he considered that that would be doing wrong towards his good-natured simple-hearted comrade, and he maintained a simple, respectful attitude towards her, and was pleased with himself for doing so.

He was thinking of this when his meditations were disturbed by the tramp of many horses' hoofs along the dusty road in front of him, as if several men were riding that way. He looked up, and saw at the end of the street a group of horsemen coming towards him at a walk. In front of a score of Cossacks rode two men: one in a white Circassian coat with a tall turban on his head; the other, an officer in the Russian service, dark, with an aquiline nose, and much silver on his uniform and weapons. The man with the turban rode a fine chestnut horse with mane and tail of a lighter shade, a small head, and beautiful eyes. The officer's was a large, handsome Karabákh horse. Butler, a lover of horses, immediately recognized the great strength of the first horse, and stopped to learn who these people were.

The officer addressed him. "This the house of commanding officer?" he asked, his foreign accent and his words betraying his foreign origin.

Butler replied that it was. "And who is that?" he added, coming nearer to the officer and indicating the man with the turban.

"That, Hadji Murád. He come here to stay with the commander," said the officer.

Butler knew about Hadji Murád, and about his having come over to the Russians; but he had not at all expected to see him here in this little fort. Hadji Murád gave him a friendly look.

"Good day, *kotkildy*," said Butler, repeating the Tartar greeting he had learnt.

"*Saubul!*" ("Be well!") replied Hadji Murád, nodding. He rode up to Butler and held out his hand, from two fingers of which hung his whip.

"Are you the chief?" he asked.

"No, the chief is in here. I will go and call him," said Butler, addressing the officer; and he went up the steps and pushed the door. But the door of the visitors' entrance—as Márya Dmítrievna called it—was locked; and as it still remained closed after he had knocked, Butler went round to the back door. He called his orderly, but received no reply; and finding neither of the two orderlies, he went into the kitchen, where Márya Dmítrievna—flushed, with a kerchief tied round her head, and her sleeves rolled up on her plump white arms—was rolling pastry, white as her hands, and cutting it into small pieces to make pies of.

"Where have the orderlies gone to?" asked Butler.

"Gone to drink," replied Márya Dmítrievna. "What do you want?"

"To have the front door opened. You have a whole horde of mountaineers in front of your house. Hadji Murád has come!"

"Invent something else!" said Márya Dmítrievna, smiling.

"I am not joking, he is really waiting by the porch!"

"Is it really true?" said she.

"Why should I wish to deceive you? Go and see, he's just at the porch!"

"Dear me, here's a go!" said Márya Dmítrievna pulling down her sleeves, and putting up her hand to feel whether the hairpins in her thick plait were all in order. "Then I will go and wake Iván Matvéich."

"No, I'll go myself. And you, Bondarénko, go and open the door," said he to Petróv's orderly, who had just appeared.

"Well, so much the better!" said Márya Dmítrievna and returned to her work.

When he heard that Hadji Murád had come to his house, Iván Matvéich Petróv, the Major, who had already heard that Hadji Murád was in Grózny, was not at all surprised; and sitting up in bed he rolled a cigarette, lit it, and began to dress, loudly clearing his throat, and grumbling at the authorities who had sent "that devil" to him.

When he was ready, he told his orderly to bring him some medicine. The orderly knew that "medicine" meant vodka, and brought some.

"There is nothing so bad as mixing," muttered the Major, when he had drunk the vodka and taken a bite of rye bread. "Yesterday I drank a little Chikhír, and now I have a headache. … Well, I'm ready," said he, and went to the parlor, into which Butler had already shown Hadji Murád and the officer who accompanied him.

The officer handed the Major orders from the commander of the Left Flank, to the effect that he should receive Hadji Murád, and should allow him to have intercourse with the mountaineers through spies, but was on no account to allow him to leave the fort without a convoy of Cossacks.

Having read the order, the Major looked intently at Hadji Murád, and again scrutinized the paper. After passing his eyes several times from one to the other in this manner, he at last fixed them on Hadji Murád and said:

"*Yakshí, Bek; yakshí!* ('very well, sir, very well!') Let him stay here, and tell him I have orders not to let him out—and what is commanded is sacred! Well, Butler, where do you think we'd better lodge him? Shall we put him in the office?"

Butler had not time to answer before Márya Dmítrievna—who had come from the kitchen and was standing in the doorway—said to the Major:

"Why? Keep him here! We will give him the guest-chamber and the storeroom. Then at any rate he will be within sight," said she, glancing at Hadji Murád; but meeting his eyes she turned quickly away.

"Well, you know, I think Márya Dmítrievna is right," said Butler.

"Now then, now then, get away! Women have no business here," said the Major frowning.

During the whole of this discussion, Hadji Murád sat with his hand on the hilt of his dagger, and a faint smile of contempt on his lips. He said it was all the same to him where he lodged, and that he wanted nothing but what the Sirdar had permitted—namely, to have communication with the mountaineers; and that he therefore wished they should be allowed to come to him.

The Major said this should be done, and asked Butler to entertain the visitors till something could be got for them to eat, and their rooms prepared. Meanwhile he himself would go across to the office, to write what was necessary, and to give some orders.

Hadji Murád's relations with his new acquaintances were at once very clearly defined. From the first he was repelled by, and contemptuous of, the Major, to whom he always behaved very haughtily. Márya Dmítrievna, who prepared and served up his food, pleased him particularly. He liked her simplicity, and especially the—to him—foreign type of her beauty, and he was influenced by the attraction she felt towards him and unconsciously conveyed. He tried not to look at her or speak to her; but his eyes involuntarily turned towards her and followed her movements. With Butler, from their first acquaintance, he immediately made friends, and talked much and willingly with him, questioning him about his life, telling him of his own, and communicating to him the news the spies brought him of his family's condition; and even consulting him as to how he ought to act.

The news he received through the spies was not good. During the first four days of his stay in the fort they came to see him twice, and both times brought bad news.

XIX

Hadji Murád's family had been removed to Vedenó soon after his desertion to the Russians, and were there kept under guard awaiting

Shamil's decision. The women—his old mother Patimát, and his two wives with their five little children—were kept under guard in the *sáklya* of the officer Ibrahim Raschid; while Hadji Murád's son, Yusúf, a youth of eighteen, was put in prison—that is, into a pit more than seven feet deep, together with seven criminals who like himself were awaiting a decision as to their fate.

The decision was delayed, because Shamil was away on a campaign against the Russians.

On January 6, 1852, he returned to Vedenó after a battle in which, according to the Russians, he had been vanquished, and had fled to Vedenó; but in which, according to him and all the *murids*, he had been victorious, and had repulsed the Russians. In this battle he himself fired his rifle—a thing he seldom did—and, drawing his sword, would have charged straight at the Russians had not the *murids* who accompanied him held him back. Two of them were killed on the spot, at Shamil's side.

It was noon when Shamil—surrounded by a party of *murids* who caracoled around him, firing their rifles and pistols and continually singing "*Lya illya il Allah*!"—rode up to his place of residence.

All the inhabitants of the large *aoul* were in the street or on their roofs to meet their ruler; and as a sign of triumph they also fired off rifles and pistols. Shamil rode a white Arab steed, which pulled at its bit as it approached the house. The horse's equipment was of the simplest, without gold or silver ornaments, a delicately worked red leather bridle with a stripe down the middle, metal cup-shaped stirrups, and a red saddlecloth showing a little from under the saddle. The Imam wore a brown cloth cloak, lined with black fur showing at the neck and sleeves, and was tightly girded round his long thin waist with a black strap which held a dagger. On his head he wore a tall cap with flat crown and black tassel; and round it was wound a white turban, one end of which hung down on his neck. He wore green slippers and black leggings, trimmed with plain braid.

In fact, the Imam wore nothing bright—no gold or silver—and his tall, erect, powerful figure, clothed in garments without any ornaments, surrounded by *murids* with gold and silver on their clothes and weapons, produced on the people just the impression and influence he desired and knew how to produce. His pale face, framed by a closely trimmed reddish beard, with his small eyes always screwed up, was as immovable as though hewn out of stone. As he rode through the *aoul* he felt the gaze of a thousand eyes turned eagerly on him, but he himself looked at no one.

Hadji Murád's wives had come out into the penthouse with the rest of the inmates of the *sáklya*, to see the Imam's entry. Only Patimát, Hadji Murád's old mother, did not go out, but remained sitting on the floor of the *sáklya* with her grey hair down, her long arms encircling her thin knees, blinking with her fiery black eyes as she watched the dying embers in the fireplace. She, like her son, had always hated Shamil; and now she hated him more than ever, and had no wish to see him. Neither did Hadji Murád's son see Shamil's triumphal entry. Sitting in the dark and fetid pit, he heard the firing and singing, and endured tortures such as can only be felt by the young who are full of vitality and deprived of freedom. He only saw his unfortunate, dirty, and exhausted fellow-prisoners—embittered, and for the most part filled with hatred of one another. He now passionately envied those who, enjoying fresh air and light and freedom, caracoled on fiery steeds around their chief, shooting and heartily singing: *Lya illyah il Allah*!

When he had crossed the *aoul*, Shamil rode into the large courtyard adjoining the inner court where his seraglio was. Two armed Lesghians met him at the open gates of this outer court, which was crowded with people. Some had come from distant parts about their own affairs; some had come with petitions; and some had been summoned by Shamil to be tried and sentenced. As Shamil rode in, all respectfully saluted the Imam with their hands on their breasts. Some knelt down and remained on their knees while he rode across the court from the outer to the inner gates. Though he recognized among the people who waited in the court many whom he disliked, and many tedious petitioners who wanted his attention, Shamil passed them all with the same immovable, stony expression on his face, and having entered the inner court, dismounted at the penthouse in front of his apartment, to the left of the gate. He was worn out, mentally rather than physically, with the strain of the campaign—for in spite of the public declaration that he had been victorious, he knew very well that his campaign had been unsuccessful; that many Chechen *aouls* had been burnt down and ruined, and that the unstable and fickle Chechens were wavering and those nearest the border line were ready to go over to the Russians.

All this oppressed him, and had to be dealt with; for at that moment Shamil did not wish to think at all. He only desired one thing: rest and the delights of family life, and the caresses of his favorite wife, the eighteen-year-old, black-eyed, quick-footed Aminal, who at that very moment was close at hand behind the fence that divided the inner court and separated the men's from the women's quarters (Shamil felt

sure she was there with his other wives, looking through a chink in the fence while he dismounted), but not only was it impossible for him to go to her, he could not even lie down on his feather cushions and rest from his fatigues, but had first of all to perform the midday rites, for which he had just then not the least inclination, but which—as the religious leader of the people—he could not omit, and which moreover, were as necessary to him himself as his daily food. So he performed his ablutions and said his prayers, and summoned those who were waiting for him.

The first to enter was Jemal Eddin, his father-in-law and teacher, a tall, grey-haired, good-looking old man with a beard white as snow and a rosy red face. He said a prayer, and began questioning Shamil about the incidents of the campaign, and telling him what had happened in the mountains during his absence.

Among events of many kinds—murders connected with blood-feuds, cattle stealing, people accused of disobeying the Tarikát (smoking and drinking wine)—Jemal Eddin related how Hadji Murád had sent men to bring his family over to the Russians, but that this had been detected, and the family had been brought to Vedenó, where they were kept under guard and awaited the Imam's decision. In the next room, the guest-chamber, the Elders were assembled to discuss all these affairs, and Jemal Eddin advised Shamil to finish with them and let them go that same day, as they had already been waiting three days for him.

After eating his dinner—served to him in his room by Zeidát, a dark, sharp-nosed, disagreeable-looking woman whom he did not love but who was his eldest wife—Shamil passed into the guest-chamber.

The six old men who made up his council—white, grey, or red-bearded, with tall caps on their heads, some with turbans and some without, wearing new *beshméts* and Circassian coats girdled with straps on which hung their daggers—rose to greet him on his entrance. Shamil towered a head above them all. He, as well as all the others, lifted his hands, palms upwards, closed his eyes and recited a prayer, and then stroked his face downwards with both hands, uniting them at the end of his beard. Having done this they all sat down, Shamil on a larger cushion than the others, and discussed the various cases before them.

In the case of the criminals, the decisions were given according to the Shariát: two were sentenced to have a hand cut off for stealing; one man to be beheaded for murder; and three were pardoned. Then they came to the principal business—how to stop the Chechens from going over to the Russians. To counteract that tendency, Jemal Eddin

drew up the following proclamation:

"I wish you eternal peace with God the Almighty!

"I hear that the Russians flatter you and invite you to surrender to them. Do not believe them, and do not surrender, but endure. If ye be not rewarded for it in this life, ye shall receive your reward in the life to come. Remember what happened before, when they took your arms from you! If God had not brought you to reason then, in 1840, ye would now be soldiers, and your wives would no longer wear trousers and would be dishonored.

"Judge of the future by the past. It is better to die in enmity with the Russians than to live with the Unbelievers. Endure for a little while, and I will come with the Koran and the sword, and will lead you against the enemy. But now I strictly command you not only to entertain no intention, but not even a thought, of submitting to the Russians!"

Shamil approved this proclamation, signed it, and had it sent out.

After this business they considered Hadji Murád's case. This was of the utmost importance to Shamil. Although he did not wish to admit it, he knew that if Hadji Murád, with his agility, boldness, and courage, had been with him, what had now happened in Chechnya would not have occurred. It would therefore be well to make it up with Hadji Murád, and have the benefit of his services; but as this was not possible, it would never do to allow him to help the Russians; and therefore he must be enticed back and killed. They might accomplish this either by sending a man to Tiflis who would kill him there, or by inducing him to come back, and then killing him. The only means of doing the latter was by making use of his family, and especially his son, whom, as Shamil knew, Hadji Murád loved passionately. Therefore they must act through the son.

When the councilors had talked all this over, Shamil closed his eyes and sat silent.

The councilors knew that this meant that he was listening to the voice of the Prophet, who spoke to him and told him what to do.

After five minutes of solemn silence Shamil opened his eyes, and narrowing them more than usual, said:

"Bring Hadji Murád's son to me."

"He is here," replied Jemal Eddin; and in fact Yusúf, Hadji Murád's son, thin, pale, tattered, and evil-smelling, but still handsome in face and figure, with black eyes that burnt like his grandmother Patimát's, was already standing by the gate of the outside court, waiting to be called in.

Yusúf did not share his father's feelings towards Shamil. He did not know all that had happened in the past, or if he knew it, not having lived through it, he still did not understand why his father was so obstinately hostile to Shamil. To him, who wanted only one thing—to continue living the easy life that, as the *naïb*'s son, he had led in Khunzákh—it seemed quite unnecessary to be at enmity with Shamil. Out of defiance and a spirit of contradiction to his father, he particularly admired Shamil, and shared the ecstatic adoration with which he was regarded in the mountains. With a peculiar feeling of tremulous veneration for the Imam, he now entered the guest-chamber. As he stopped by the door he met the steady gaze of Shamil's half-closed eyes. He paused for a moment, and then approached Shamil and kissed his large, long-fingered hand.

"Thou are Hadji Murád's son?"

"I am, Imam."

"Thou knowest what he has done?"

"I know, Imam, and deplore it."

"Canst thou write?"

"I was preparing myself to be a Mullah—"

"Then write to thy father that if he will return to me now, before the Feast of Bairam, I will forgive him, and everything shall be as it was before; but if not, and if he remains with the Russians"—and Shamil frowned sternly—"I will give thy grandmother, thy mother, and the rest to the different *aouls*, and thee I will behead!"

Not a muscle of Yusúf's face stirred, and he bowed his head to show that he understood Shamil's words.

"Write that, and give it to my messenger."

Shamil ceased speaking, and looked at Yusúf for a long time in silence.

"Write that I have had pity on thee and will not kill thee, but will put out thine eyes as I do to all traitors! … Go!"

While in Shamil's presence Yusúf appeared calm; but when he had been led out of the guest-chamber he rushed at his attendant, snatched the man's dagger from its sheath and tried to stab himself; but he was seized by the arms, bound, and led back to the pit.

That evening at dusk, after he had finished his evening prayers, Shamil put on a white fur-lined cloak, and passed out to the other side of the fence where his wives lived, and went straight to Aminal's room; but he did not find her there. She was with the older wives. Then Shamil, trying to remain unseen, hid behind the door and stood waiting for her. But Aminal was angry with him because he had given

some silk stuff to Zeidát, and not to her. She saw him come out and go into her room looking for her, and she purposely kept away. She stood a long time at the door of Zeidát's room, softly laughing at Shamil's white figure that kept going in and out of her room.

Having waited for her in vain, Shamil returned to his own apartments when it was already time for the midnight prayers.

XX

Hadji Murád had been a week in the Major's house at the fort. Although Márya Dmítrievna quarrelled with the shaggy Khanéfi (Hadji Murád had only brought two of his *murids*, Khanéfi and Eldár, with him) and had turned him out of her kitchen—for which he nearly killed her—she evidently felt a particular respect and sympathy for Hadji Murád. She now no longer served him his dinner, having handed that duty over to Eldár, but she seized every opportunity of seeing him and rendering him service. She always took the liveliest interest in the negotiations about his family, knew how many wives and children he had, and their ages; and each time a spy came to see him, she inquired as best she could into the results of the negotiations.

Butler during that week had become quite friendly with Hadji Murád. Sometimes the latter came to Butler's room; sometimes Butler went to Hadji Murád's. Sometimes they conversed by the help of the interpreter; and sometimes they got on as best they could with signs and especially with smiles.

Hadji Murád had evidently taken a fancy to Butler. This could be gathered from Eldár's relations with the latter. When Butler entered Hadji Murád's room, Eldár met him with a pleased smile, showing his glittering teeth, and hurried to put down a cushion for him to sit on, and to relieve him of his sword if he was wearing one.

Butler also got to know, and became friendly with, the shaggy Khanéfi, Hadji Murád's sworn brother. Khanéfi knew many mountain songs, and sang them well. To please Butler, Hadji Murád often made Khanéfi sing, choosing the songs he considered best. Khanéfi had a high tenor voice, and sang with extraordinary clearness and expression. One of the songs Hadji Murád specially liked impressed Butler by its solemnly mournful tone, and he asked the interpreter to translate it.

The subject of the song was the very blood-feud that had existed between Khanéfi and Hadji Murád. It ran as follows:

"The earth will dry on my grave,
Mother, my Mother!
And thou wilt forget me!
And over me rank grass will wave,
Father, my Father!
Nor wilt thou regret me!
When tears cease thy dark eyes to lave,
Sister, dear Sister!
No more will grief fret thee!

But thou, my Brother the elder, wilt never forget,
With vengeance denied me!
And thou, my Brother the younger, wilt ever regret,
Till thou liest beside me!

Hotly thou camest, O death-bearing ball that I spurned,
For thou wast my slave!
And thou, black earth, that battle-steed trampled and churned,
Wilt cover my grave!

Cold art Thou, O Death, yet I was thy Lord and thy Master!
My body sinks fast to the earth; my soul to Heaven flies faster."

Hadji Murád always listened to this song with closed eyes, and when it ended on a long gradually dying note he always remarked in Russian—

"Good song! Wise song!"

After Hadji Murád's arrival and his intimacy with him and his *murids*, the poetry of the stirring mountain life took a still stronger hold on Butler. He procured for himself a *beshmét*, a Circassian coat and leggings, and imagined himself a mountaineer living the life those people lived.

On the day of Hadji Murád's departure, the Major invited several officers to see him off. They were sitting, some at the table where Márya Dmítrievna was pouring out tea, some at another table on which stood vodka, Chikhír, and light refreshments, when Hadji Murád, dressed for the journey, came limping with soft, rapid footsteps into the room.

They all rose and shook hands with him. The Major offered him a seat on the divan, but Hadji Murád thanked him and sat down on a chair by the window.

The silence that followed his entrance did not at all abash him. He looked attentively at all the faces and fixed an indifferent gaze on the tea-table with the samovar and refreshments. Petróvsky, a lively officer who now met Hadji Murád for the first time, asked him through the interpreter whether he liked Tiflis.

"*Alya!*" he replied.

"He says, 'Yes,' " translated the interpreter.

"What did he like there?"

Hadji Murád said something in reply.

"He liked the theater best of all."

"And how did he like the ball at the house of the commander-in-chief?"

Hadji Murád frowned. "Every nation has its own customs! Our women do not dress in such a way," said he, glancing at Márya Dmítrievna.

"Well, didn't he like it?"

"We have a proverb," said Hadji Murád to the interpreter, " 'The dog gave meat to the ass, and the ass gave hay to the dog, and both went hungry,' " and he smiled. "Its own customs seem good to each nation."

The conversation went no farther. Some of the officers took tea; some, other refreshments. Hadji Murád accepted the tumbler of tea offered him, and put it down before him.

"Won't you have cream and a bun?" asked Márya Dmítrievna, offering them to him.

Hadji Murád bowed his head.

"Well, I suppose it is goodbye!" said Butler, touching his knee. "When shall we meet again?"

"Goodbye, goodbye!" said Hadji Murád, in Russian, with a smile. "*Kunák bulug.* Strong *kunák* to thee! Time—*ayda*—go!" and he jerked his head in the direction in which he had to go.

Eldár appeared in the doorway carrying some large white thing across his shoulder and a sword in his hand. Hadji Murád beckoned him to himself, and Eldár crossed the room with big strides and handed him a white burka and the sword. Hadji Murád rose, took the burka, threw it over his arm, and saying something to the interpreter, handed it to Márya Dmítrievna.

"He says thou hast praised the burka, so accept it," said the interpreter.

"Oh, why?" said Márya Dmítrievna, blushing.

"It is necessary. Like Adam," said Hadji Murád.

"Well, thank you," said Márya Dmítrievna, taking the burka. "God grant that you rescue your son," she added. "*Ulan yakshí.* Tell him that I wish him success in releasing his son."

Hadji Murád glanced at Márya Dmítrievna and nodded his head approvingly. Then he took the sword from Eldár and handed it to the Major. The Major took it and said to the interpreter, "Tell him to take my chestnut gelding. I have nothing else to give him."

Hadji Murád waved his hand in front of his face to show that he did not want anything and would not accept it. Then, pointing first to the mountains and then to his heart, he went out.

Everyone followed him as far as the door. The officers who remained inside the room drew the sword from its scabbard, examined its blade, and decided that it was a real Gurda.[80]

Butler accompanied Hadji Murád to the porch, and then something very unexpected occurred which might have ended fatally for Hadji Murád, had it not been for his quick observation, determination, and agility.

The inhabitants of the Kumúkh *aoul*, Tash-Kichu, which was friendly to the Russians, greatly respected Hadji Murád, and had often come to the fort merely to look at the famous *naïb*. They had sent messengers to him three days previously to ask him to visit their mosque on the Friday. But the Kumúkh princes who lived in Tash-Kichu hated Hadji Murád because there was a blood-feud between them; and on hearing of this invitation they announced to the people that they would not allow him to enter the mosque. The people became excited and a fight occurred between them and the princes' supporters. The Russian authorities pacified the mountaineers and sent word to Hadji Murád not to go to the mosque.

Hadji Murád did not go and everyone supposed that the matter was settled.

But at the very moment of his departure, when he came out into the porch before which the horses stood waiting, Arslán Khan—one of the Kumúkh princes and an acquaintance of Butler's and the Major's, rode up to the house.

When he saw Hadji Murád he snatched a pistol from his belt and aimed at him; but before he could fire, Hadji Murád—in spite of his lameness—rushed down from the porch like a cat towards Arslán Khan, who fired and missed.

Seizing Arslán Khan's horse by the bridle with one hand, Hadji

[80] A highly prized quality of blade. —*A. M.*

Murád drew his dagger with the other and shouted something to him in Tartar.

Butler and Eldár both ran at once towards the enemies and caught them by the arms. The Major, who had heard the shot, also came out.

"What do you mean by it, Arslán—starting such a nasty business on my premises?" said he, when he heard what had happened. "It's not right, friend! 'To the foe in the field you need not yield!'—but to start this kind of slaughter in my place—!"

Arslán Khan, a little man with black mustaches, got off his horse pale and, trembling, looked angrily at Hadji Murád, and went into the house with the Major. Hadji Murád, breathing heavily and smiling, returned to the horses.

"Why did he want to kill him?" Butler asked the interpreter.

"He says it is a law of theirs," the interpreter translated Hadji Murád's reply. "Arslán must avenge a relation's blood, and so he tried to kill him."

"And supposing he overtakes him on the road?" asked Butler.

Hadji Murád smiled.

"Well, if he kills me it will prove that such is Allah's will. … Goodbye," he said again in Russian, taking his horse by the withers. Glancing round at everybody who had come out to see him off, his eyes rested kindly on Márya Dmítrievna.

"Goodbye, my lass," said he to her. "I thank you."

"God help you—God help you to rescue your family!" repeated Márya Dmítrievna.

He did not understand her words, but felt her sympathy for him and nodded to her.

"Mind, don't forget your *kunák*," said Butler.

"Tell him I am his true friend and will never forget him," answered Hadji Murád to the interpreter; and in spite of his short leg he swung himself lightly and quickly, barely touching the stirrup, into the high saddle, automatically feeling for his dagger and adjusting his sword. Then, with that peculiarly proud look with which only a Caucasian hillsman sits his horse—as though he were one with it—he rode away from the Major's house. Khanéfi and Eldár also mounted, and having taken a friendly leave of their hosts and of the officers, rode off at a trot, following their *Murshíd*.

As usual after anyone's departure, those who remained behind began to discuss those who had left.

"Plucky fellow! Didn't he rush at Arslán Khan like a wolf! His face quite changed!"

"But he'll be up to tricks—he's a terrible rogue, I should say," remarked Petróvsky.

"God grant there were more Russian rogues of such a kind!" suddenly put in Márya Dmítrievna with vexation. "He has lived a week with us and we have seen nothing but good from him. He is courteous, wise, and just," she added.

"How did you find that out?"

"Well, I did find it out!"

"She's quite smitten," said the Major, who had just entered the room; "and that's a fact!"

"Well, and if I am smitten? What's that to you? But why run him down if he's a good man? Though he's a Tartar, he's still a good man!"

"Quite true, Márya Dmítrievna," said Butler; "and you're quite right to take his part!"

XXI

Life in our advanced forts in the Chechen lines went on as usual. Since the events last narrated there had been two alarms when the companies were called out, and militiamen galloped about; but both times the mountaineers who had caused the excitement got away; and once at Vozdvízhensk they killed a Cossack, and succeeded in carrying off eight Cossack horses that were being watered. There had been no further raids since the one in which the *aoul* was destroyed; but an expedition on a large scale was expected in consequence of the appointment of a new commander of the left flank, Prince Baryátinsky. He was an old friend of the Viceroy's, and had been in command of the Kabardá Regiment. On his arrival at Grózny as commander of the whole Left Flank, he at once mustered a detachment to continue to carry out the Tsar's commands as communicated by Chernyshóv to Vorontsóv. The detachment mustered at Vozdvízhensk left the fort and took up a position towards Kurín. The troops were encamped there, and were felling the forest. Young Vorontsóv lived in a splendid cloth tent, and his wife, Márya Vasílevna, often came to the camp and stayed the night. Baryátinsky's relations with Márya Vasílevna were no secret to anyone, and the officers who were not in the aristocratic set, and the soldiers, abused her in coarse terms—for her presence in camp caused them to be told off to lie in ambush at night. The mountaineers were in the habit of bringing guns with range and firing shells at the camp.

The shells generally missed their aim, and therefore at ordinary times no special measures were taken to prevent such firing; but now, men were placed in ambush to hinder the mountaineers from injuring or frightening Márya Vasílevna with their cannon. To have to be always lying in ambush at night to save a lady from being frightened, offended and annoyed them; and therefore the soldiers, as well as the officers not admitted to the higher society, called Márya Vasílevna bad names.

Butler, having obtained leave of absence from his fort, came to the camp to visit some old messmates from the cadet corps and fellow officers of the Kurín regiment, who were serving as adjutants and orderly officers. When he first arrived he had a very good time. He put up in Poltorátsky's tent, and there met many acquaintances who gave him a hearty welcome. He also called on Vorontsóv, whom he knew slightly, having once served in the same regiment with him. Vorontsóv received him very kindly, introduced him to Prince Baryátinsky, and invited him to the farewell dinner he was giving in honor of General Kozlóvsky, who until Baryátinsky's arrival had been in command of the left flank.

The dinner was magnificent. Special tents were erected in a line, and along the whole length of them a table was spread as for a dinner-party, with dinner services and bottles. Everything recalled life in the guards in Petersburg. Dinner was served at two o'clock. In the middle on one side sat Kozlóvsky; on the other, Baryátinsky. At Kozlóvsky's right and left hand sat the Vorontsóvs, husband and wife. All along the table on both sides sat the officers of the Kabardá and Kurín regiments. Butler sat next to Poltorátsky and they both chatted merrily and drank with the officers around them. When the roast was served and the orderlies had gone round and filled the champagne glasses, Poltorátsky, with real anxiety, said to Butler:

"Our Kozlóvsky will disgrace himself!"

"Why?"

"Why, he'll have to make a speech, and what good is he at that? … It's not as easy as capturing entrenchments under fire! And with a lady beside him, too, and these aristocrats!"

"Really it's painful to look at him," said the officers to one another. And now the solemn moment had arrived. Baryátinsky rose and lifting his glass addressed a short speech to Kozlóvsky. When he had finished, Kozlóvsky—who always had a trick of using the word "how" superfluously—rose and stammeringly began:

"In compliance with the august will of his Majesty, I am leaving you—parting from you, gentlemen," said he. "But consider me as always remaining among you. The truth of the proverb, how 'One man

in the field is no warrior,' is well known to you, gentlemen. … Therefore, how every reward I have received … how all the benefits showered on me by the great generosity of our sovereign the Emperor … how all my position—how my good name … how everything decidedly … how …" (here his voice trembled) "… how I am indebted to you for it, to you alone, my friends!" The wrinkled face puckered up still more, he gave a sob, and tears came into his eyes. "How from my heart I offer you my sincerest, heartfelt gratitude!"

Kozlóvsky could not go on, but turned round and began to embrace the officers. The Princess hid her face in her handkerchief. The Prince blinked, with his mouth drawn awry. Many of the officers' eyes grew moist and Butler, who had hardly known Kozlóvsky, could also not restrain his tears. He liked all this very much.

Then followed other toasts. Baryátinsky, Vorontsóv, the officers, and the soldiers' healths were drunk, and the visitors left the table intoxicated with wine and with the military elation to which they were always so prone. The weather was wonderful, sunny and calm, and the air fresh and bracing. On all sides bonfires crackled and songs resounded. It might have been thought that everybody was celebrating some joyful event. Butler went to Poltorátsky's in the happiest, most emotional mood. Several officers had gathered there, and a card table was set. An adjutant started a bank with a hundred rubles. Two or three times Butler left the tent with his hand gripping the purse in his trousers-pocket; but at last he could resist the temptation no longer, and despite the promise he had given to his brother and to himself not to play, he began to bet. Before an hour was past, very red, perspiring, and soiled with chalk, he was sitting with both elbows on the table and writing on it—under cards bent for "corners" and "transports"[81]—the figures of his stakes. He had already lost so much that he was afraid to count up what was scored against him. But he knew without counting that all the pay he could draw in advance, added to the value of his horse, would not suffice to pay what the adjutant, a stranger to him, had written down against him. He would still have gone on playing, but the adjutant sternly laid down the cards he held in his large clean hands, and added up the chalked figures of the score of Butler's losses. Butler, confused, began to make excuses for being unable to pay the whole of his debt at once; and said he would send it from home. When he said this he noticed that everybody pitied him, and that they all—

[81] These expressions relate to the game of *shtos* and have been explained in *Two Hussars*. —*A. M.*

even Poltorátsky—avoided meeting his eye. That was his last evening there. He need only have refrained from playing, and gone to the Vorontsóvs who had invited him, and all would have been well, thought he; but now it was not only not well, but terrible.

Having taken leave of his comrades and acquaintances he rode home and went to bed, and slept for eighteen hours as people usually sleep after losing heavily. From the fact that he asked her to lend him fifty kopeks to tip the Cossack who had escorted him, and from his sorrowful looks and short answers, Márya Dmítrievna guessed that he had lost at cards, and she reproached the Major for having given him leave of absence.

When he woke up at noon next day and remembered the situation he was in, he longed again to plunge into the oblivion from which he had just emerged; but it was impossible. Steps had to be taken to repay the four hundred and seventy rubles he owed to the stranger. The first step he took was to write to his brother, confessing his sin and imploring him, for the last time, to lend him five hundred rubles on the security of the mill that they still owned in common. Then he wrote to a stingy relative, asking her to lend him five hundred rubles at whatever rate of interest she liked. Finally he went to the Major, knowing that he—or rather Márya Dmítrievna—had some money, and asked him to lend him five hundred rubles.

"I'd let you have them at once," said the Major, "but Másha won't! These women are so closefisted—who the devil can understand them? … And yet you must get out of it somehow, devil take him! … Hasn't that brute the canteen-keeper got something?"

But it was no use trying to borrow from the canteen-keeper; so Butler's salvation could only come from his brother or his stingy relative.

XXII

Not having attained his aim in Chechnya, Hadji Murád returned to Tiflis and went every day to Vorontsóv's; and whenever he could obtain audience he implored the Viceroy to gather together the mountaineer prisoners and exchange them for his family. He said that unless that were done his hands were tied and he could not serve the Russians and destroy Shamil, as he desired to do. Vorontsóv vaguely promised to do what he could, but put it off, saying that he would decide when General Argutínski reached Tiflis and he could talk the matter over with him.

Then Hadji Murád asked Vorontsóv to allow him to go to live for a while in Nukhá, a small town in Transcaucasia, where he thought he could better carry on negotiations about his family with Shamil and with the people who were attached to himself. Moreover, Nukhá, being a Mohammedan town, had a mosque where he could more conveniently perform the rites of prayer demanded by the Mohammedan law. Vorontsóv wrote to Petersburg about it, but meanwhile gave Hadji Murád permission to go to Nukhá.

For Vorontsóv and the authorities in Petersburg, as well as for most Russians acquainted with Hadji Murád's history, the whole episode presented itself as a lucky turn in the Caucasian war, or simply as an interesting event. For Hadji Murád, on the other hand, it was a terrible crisis in his life. He had escaped from the mountains partly to save himself, partly out of hatred of Shamil; and difficult as this flight had been, he had attained his object, and for a time was glad of his success, and really devised a plan to attack Shamil; but the rescue of his family—which he had thought would be easy to arrange—had proved more difficult than he expected.

Shamil had seized the family and kept them prisoners, threatening to hand the women over to the different *aouls*, and to blind or kill the son. Now Hadji Murád had gone to Nukhá intending to try, by the aid of his adherents in Daghestan, to rescue his family from Shamil by force or by cunning. The last spy who had come to see him in Nukhá informed him that the Avars devoted to him were preparing to capture his family and to come over to the Russians with it; but that there were not enough of them, and they could not risk making the attempt in Vedenó where the family was presently imprisoned, but could do so only if the family were moved from Vedenó to some other place—in which case they promised to rescue them on the way.

Hadji Murád sent word to his friends that he would give three thousand rubles for the liberation of his family.

At Nukhá a small house of five rooms was assigned to Hadji Murád near the mosque and the Khan's palace. The officers in charge of him, his interpreter, and his henchmen stayed in the same house. Hadji Murád's life was spent in the expectation and reception of messengers from the mountains, and in rides he was allowed to take in the neighborhood.

On 24th April, returning from one of these rides, Hadji Murád learnt that during his absence an official had arrived from Tiflis, sent by Vorontsóv. In spite of his longing to know what message the official had brought him, Hadji Murád, before going into the room where the

officer in charge and the official were waiting, went to his bedroom and repeated his noonday prayer. When he had finished he came out into the room which served him as drawing and reception room. The official who had come from Tiflis, Councillor Kiríllov, informed Hadji Murád of Vorontsóv's wish that he should come to Tiflis on the 12th to meet General Argutínski.

"*Yakshí!*" said Hadji Murád angrily. The councillor did not please him. "Have you brought money?"

"I have," answered Kiríllov.

"For two weeks now," said Hadji Murád, holding up first both hands and then four fingers. "Give here!"

"We'll give it you at once," said the official, getting his purse out of his traveling bag. "What does he want with the money?" he went on in Russian, thinking that Hadji Murád would not understand. But Hadji Murád understood, and glanced angrily at Kiríllov. While getting out the money the councillor, wishing to begin a conversation with Hadji Murád in order to have something to tell Prince Vorontsóv on his return, asked through the interpreter whether Hadji Murád was not feeling dull there. Hadji Murád glanced contemptuously out of the corner of his eye at the fat, unarmed little man dressed as a civilian, and did not reply. The interpreter repeated the question.

"Tell him that I cannot talk with him! Let him give me the money!" and having said this, Hadji Murád sat down at the table ready to count it.

When Kiríllov had got out the money and arranged it in seven piles of ten gold pieces each (Hadji Murád received five gold pieces daily) and pushed them towards Hadji Murád, the latter poured the gold into the sleeve of his Circassian coat, rose, quite unexpectedly slapped Councillor Kiríllov on his bald pate, and turned to go.

The councillor jumped up and ordered the interpreter to tell Hadji Murád that he must not dare to behave like that to him who held a rank equal to that of colonel! The officer in charge confirmed this, but Hadji Murád only nodded to signify that he knew, and left the room.

"What is one to do with him?" said the officer in charge. "He'll stick his dagger into you, that's all! One cannot talk with those devils! I see that he is getting exasperated."

As soon as it began to grow dusk, two spies with hoods covering their faces up to their eyes, came to him from the hills. The officer in charge led them to Hadji Murád's room. One of them was a fleshy, swarthy Tavlinian; the other, a thin old man. The news they brought was not cheering for Hadji Murád. His friends who had undertaken

to rescue his family, now definitely refused to do so, being afraid of Shamil—who threatened to punish with most terrible tortures anyone who helped Hadji Murád. Having heard the messengers, Hadji Murád sat with his elbows on his crossed legs, and bowing his turbaned head, remained silent a long time.

He was thinking, and thinking resolutely. He knew that he was now considering the matter for the last time, and that it was necessary to come to a decision. At last he raised his head, gave each of the messengers a gold piece, and said: "Go!"

"What answer will there be?"

"The answer will be as God pleases. … Go!"

The messengers rose and went away, and Hadji Murád continued to sit on the carpet, leaning his elbows on his knees. He sat thus a long time, and pondered.

"What am I to do? To take Shamil at his word and return to him?" he thought. "He is a fox and will deceive me. Even if he did not deceive me, it would still be impossible to submit to that red liar. It is impossible … because now that I have been with the Russians he will not trust me," thought Hadji Murád; and he remembered a Tavlinian fable about a falcon who had been caught and lived among men and afterwards returned to his own kind in the hills. He returned, wearing jesses with bells; and the other falcons would not receive him. "Fly back to where they hung those silver bells on thee!" said they. "We have no bells and no jesses." The falcon did not want to leave his home, and remained; but the other falcons did not wish to let him stay there, and pecked him to death.

"And they would peck me to death in the same way," thought Hadji Murád. "Shall I remain here and conquer Caucasia for the Russian Tsar, and earn renown, titles, riches?"

"That could be done," thought he, recalling his interviews with Vorontsóv, and the flattering things the Prince had said; "but I must decide at once, or Shamil will destroy my family."

That night Hadji Murád remained awake, thinking.

XXIII

By midnight his decision had been formed. He had decided that he must fly to the mountains, and with the Avars still devoted to him must break into Vedenó, and either die or rescue his family. Whether after rescuing them he would return to the Russians or escape to Khunzákh

and fight Shamil, he had not made up his mind. All he knew was that first of all he must escape from the Russians into the mountains; and he at once began to carry out his plan.

He drew his black wadded *beshmét* from under his pillow and went into his henchmen's room. They lived on the other side of the hall. As soon as he entered the hall, the outer door of which stood open, he was at once enveloped by the dewy freshness of the moonlit night and his ears were filled by the whistling and trilling of several nightingales in the garden by the house.

Having crossed the hall, Hadji Murád opened the door of his henchmen's room. There was no light in the room, but the moon in its first quarter shone in at the window. A table and two chairs were standing on one side of the room; and four of Hadji Murád's henchmen were lying on carpets or on burkas on the floor. Khanéfi slept outside with the horses. Gamzálo heard the door creak, rose, turned round, and saw Hadji Murád. On recognizing him he lay down again. But Eldár, who lay beside him, jumped up and began putting on his *beshmét*, expecting his master's orders. Khan Mahomá and Bata slept on. Hadji Murád put down the *beshmét* he had brought on the table, which it hit with a dull sound. This was caused by the gold sewn up in it.

"Sew these in too," said Hadji Murád, handing Eldár the gold pieces he had received that day. Eldár took them, and at once went into the moonlight, drew a small knife from under his dagger, and started unstitching the lining of the *beshmét*. Gamzálo raised himself and sat up with his legs crossed.

"And you, Gamzálo, tell the men to examine the rifles and pistols and get the ammunition ready. Tomorrow we shall go far," said Hadji Murád.

"We have bullets and powder; everything shall be ready," replied Gamzálo, and roared out something incomprehensible. He understood why Hadji Murád had ordered the rifles to be loaded. From the first he had desired only one thing—to slay and stab as many Russians as possible, and to escape to the hills; and this desire had increased day by day. Now at last he saw that Hadji Murád also wanted this, and he was satisfied.

When Hadji Murád went away, Gamzálo roused his comrades, and all four spent the rest of the night examining their rifles, pistols, flints, and accoutrements; replacing what was damaged, sprinkling fresh powder onto the pans, and stoppering packets filled with powder measured for each charge with bullets wrapped in oiled rags, sharpening their swords and daggers and greasing the blades with tallow.

Before daybreak Hadji Murád again came out into the hall to get water for his ablutions. The songs of the nightingales that had burst into ecstasy at dawn were now even louder and more incessant than they had done before, while from his henchmen's room, where the daggers were being sharpened, came the regular screech and rasp of iron against stone.

Hadji Murád got himself some water from a tub, and was already at his own door when, above the sound of the grinding, he heard from his *murids'* room the high tones of Khanéfi's voice singing a familiar song. He stopped to listen. The song told of how a *dzhigít*, Hamzád, with his brave followers captured a herd of white horses from the Russians, and how a Russian prince followed him beyond the Térek and surrounded him with an army as large as a forest; and then the song went on to tell how Hamzád killed the horses, and, with his men entrenched behind this gory bulwark, fought the Russians as long as they had bullets in their rifles, daggers in their belts, and blood in their veins. But before he died Hamzád saw some birds flying in the sky and cried to them:

"Fly on, ye winged ones, fly to our homes!
Tell ye our mothers, tell ye our sisters,
Tell the white maidens, that fighting we died
For *Ghazavát*! Tell them our bodies
Never will lie and rest in a tomb!
Wolves will devour and tear them to pieces,
Ravens and vultures will pluck out our eyes."

With that the song ended, and at the last words, sung to a mournful air, the merry Bata's vigorous voice joined in with a loud shout of "*Lya-il-lyakha-il Allakh!*" finishing with a shrill shriek. Then all was quiet again, except for the *tchut, tchut, tchut, tchut* and whistling of the nightingales from the garden, and from behind the door the even grinding, and now and then the whizz, of iron sliding quickly along the whetstone.

Hadji Murád was so full of thought that he did not notice how he tilted his jug till the water began to pour out. He shook his head at himself, and reentered his room. After performing his morning ablutions he examined his weapons and sat down on his bed. There was nothing more for him to do. To be allowed to ride out, he would have to get permission from the officer in charge; but it was not yet daylight and the officer was still asleep.

Khanéfi's song reminded him of the song, the one his mother had composed just after he was born—the song addressed to his father, that Hadji Murád had repeated to Lóris-Mélikov.

> "Thy sword of Damascus-steel tore my white bosom;
> But close on it laid I my own little boy;
> In my hot-streaming blood him I laved; and the wound
> Without herbs or specifics was soon fully healed.
> As I, facing death, remained fearless, so he,
> My boy, my *dzhigít*, from all fear shall be free!"

He remembered how his mother put him to sleep beside her under a cloak, on the roof of their *sáklya*, and how he asked her to let him see the place on her side where the wound had left a scar. Hadji Murád seemed to see his mother before him—not wrinkled and grey-haired, with gaps between her teeth, as he had lately left her, but young, handsome, and so strong that she carried him in a basket on her back across the mountains to her father's when he was a heavy five-year-old boy. He also recalled his grandfather, wrinkled and grey-bearded, and how the old man hammered silver with his sinewy hands, and made him say his prayers.

He thought of the fountain at the foot of the hill, whither, holding to her wide trousers, he went with his mother to fetch water. He remembered the lean dog that used to lick his face, and he recalled with special vividness the peculiar smell of sour milk and smoke in the shed where his mother took him with her when she went to milk the cows or scald the milk. He remembered how she shaved his head for the first time, and how surprised he was to see his round blue-gleaming head reflected in the brightly-polished brass basin that hung against the wall.

And the recollection of himself as a little child reminded him of his beloved son, Yusúf, whose head he himself had shaved for the first time; and now this Yusúf was a handsome young *dzhigít*. He pictured him as he was when last he saw him. It was on the day Hadji Murád left Tselméss. His son brought him his horse and asked to be allowed to accompany him. Yusúf was ready dressed and armed, and led his own horse by the bridle. His rosy handsome young face and the whole of his tall slender figure (he was taller than his father) breathed of daring, youth, and the joy of life. The breadth of his shoulders, though he was so young, the very wide youthful hips, the long slender waist, the

strength of his long arms, and the power, flexibility, and agility of all his movements had always rejoiced Hadji Murád, who admired his son.

"Thou hadst better stay. Thou wilt be alone at home now. Take care of thy mother and thy grandmother," said Hadji Murád. And he remembered the spirited and proud look and the flush of pleasure with which Yusúf had replied that as long as he lived no one should injure his mother or grandmother. All the same Yusúf had mounted and accompanied his father as far as the stream. There he turned back, and since then Hadji Murád had not seen his wife, his mother, or his son. And it was this son whose eyes Shamil wished to put out! Of what would be done to his wife, Hadji Murád did not wish to think.

These thoughts so excited him that he could not sit still any longer. He jumped up and went limping quickly to the door, opened it, and called Eldár. The sun had not yet risen, but it was already quite light. The nightingales were still singing.

"Go and tell the officer that I want to go out riding; and saddle the horses," said he.

XXIV

Butler's only consolation all this time was the poetry of warfare, to which he gave himself up not only during his hours of service, but also in private life. Dressed in his Circassian costume he rode and swaggered about, and twice went into ambush with Bogdanóvich, though neither time did they discover or kill anyone. This closeness to and friendship with Bogdanóvich, famed for his courage, seemed pleasant and warlike to Butler. He had paid his debt, having borrowed the money of a Jew at an enormous rate of interest—that is to say, he had postponed his difficulties without solving them. He tried not to think of his position, and to find oblivion not only in the poetry of warfare, but also in wine. He drank more and more every day, and day by day grew morally weaker. He was now no longer the chaste Joseph he had been towards Márya Dmítrievna, but on the contrary began courting her grossly, but to his surprise, met with a strong and decided repulse which put him to shame.

At the end of April there arrived at the fort a detachment with which Baryátinsky intended to effect an advance right through Chechnya, which had till then been considered impassable. In that detachment were two companies of the Kabardá regiment, and according to Caucasian custom these were treated as guests by the Kurín compa-

nies. The soldiers were lodged in the barracks, and were treated not only to supper, consisting of buckwheat porridge and beef, but also to vodka. The officers shared the quarters of the Kurín officers, and as usual those in residence gave the newcomers a dinner, at which the regimental singers performed, and which ended up with a drinking bout. Major Petróv, very drunk and no longer red but ashy pale, sat astride a chair, and drawing his sword, hacked at imaginary foes, alternately swearing and laughing, now embracing someone and now dancing to the tune of his favorite song.

> Shamil, he began to riot
> In the days gone by;
> Try, ry, rataty,
> In the years gone by!

Butler was there, too. He tried to see the poetry of warfare in this also; but in the depth of his soul he was sorry for the Major. To stop him, however, was quite impossible; and Butler, feeling that the fumes were mounting to his own head, quietly left the room and went home.

The moon lit up the white houses and the stones on the road. It was so light that every pebble, every straw, every little heap of dust was visible. As he approached the house, Butler met Márya Dmítrievna with a shawl over her head and neck. After the rebuff she had given him, Butler had avoided her, feeling rather ashamed; but now, in the moonlight and after the wine he had drunk, he was pleased to meet her, and wished to make up to her again.

"Where are you off to?" he asked.

"Why, to see after my old man," she answered pleasantly. Her rejection of Butler's advances was quite sincere and decided, but she did not like his avoiding her as he had done lately.

"Why bother about him? He'll soon come back."

"But will he?"

"If he doesn't, they'll bring him."

"Just so. … That's not right, you know! … But you think I'd better not go?"

"Yes, I do. We'd better go home."

Márya Dmítrievna turned back and walked beside him. The moon shone so brightly that round the shadows of their heads a halo seemed to move along the road. Butler was looking at this halo and making up his mind to tell her that he liked her as much as ever, but he did not know how to begin. She waited to hear what he would say. So

they walked on in silence almost to the house, when some horsemen appeared from round the corner. These were an officer with an escort.

"Who's that coming now?" said Márya Dmítrievna, stepping aside. The moon was behind the rider, so that she did not recognize him until he had almost come up to Butler and herself. It was Peter Nikoláevich Kámenev, an officer who had formerly served with the Major, and whom Márya Dmítrievna therefore knew.

"Is that you, Peter Nikoláevich?" said she, addressing him.

"It's me," said Kámenev. "Ah, Butler, how d'you do? … Not asleep yet? Having a walk with Márya Dmítrievna! You'd better look out or the Major will give it you. … Where is he?"

"Why, there. … Listen!" replied Márya Dmítrievna pointing in the direction whence came the sounds of a *tulumbas*[82] and of songs. "They're on the spree."

"Why? Are your people having a spree on their own?"

"No; some officers have come from Hasav-Yurt, and they are being entertained."

"Ah, that's good! I shall be in time. … I just want the Major for a moment."

"On business?" asked Butler.

"Yes, just a little business matter."

"Good or bad?"

"It all depends. … Good for us but bad for some people," and Kámenev laughed.

By this time they had reached the Major's house.

"Chikhirév," shouted Kámenev to one of his Cossacks, "come here!"

A Don Cossack rode up from among the others. He was dressed in the ordinary Don Cossack uniform, with high boots and a mantle, and carried saddlebags behind.

"Well, take the thing out," said Kámenev, dismounting.

The Cossack also dismounted, and took a sack out of his saddlebag. Kámenev took the sack from him and put his hand in.

"Well, shall I show you a novelty? You won't be frightened, Márya Dmítrievna?"

"Why should I be frightened?" she replied.

"Here it is!" said Kámenev, taking out a man's head and holding it up in the light of the moon. "Do you recognize it?"

It was a shaven head with salient brows, black shortcut beard and mustaches, one eye open and the other half-closed. The shaven skull

[82] *Tulumbas*: a sort of kettledrum.

was cleft, but not right through, and there was congealed blood in the nose. The neck was wrapped in a bloodstained towel. Notwithstanding the many wounds on the head, the blue lips still bore a kindly childlike expression.

Márya Dmítrievna looked at it, and without a word turned away and went quickly into the house.

Butler could not tear his eyes from the terrible head. It was the head of that very Hadji Murád with whom he had so recently spent his evenings in such friendly intercourse.

"What does this mean? Who has killed him?" he asked.

"He wanted to give us the slip, but was caught," said Kámenev, and he gave the head back to the Cossack, and went into the house with Butler.

"He died like a hero," he added.

"But however did it all happen?"

"Just wait a bit. When the Major comes I will tell you all about it. That's what I am sent for. I take it round to all the forts and *aouls* and show it."

The Major was sent for, and came back accompanied by two other officers as drunk as himself, and began embracing Kámenev.

"And I have brought you Hadji Murád's head," said Kámenev.

"No? … Killed?"

"Yes; wanted to escape."

"I always said he would bamboozle them! … and where is it? The head, I mean. … Let's see it."

The Cossack was called, and brought in the bag with the head. It was taken out, and the Major looked long at it with drunken eyes.

"All the same, he was a fine fellow," said he. "Let me kiss him!"

"Yes, it's true. It was a valiant head," said one of the officers.

When they had all looked at it, it was returned to the Cossack, who put it in his bag, trying to let it bump against the floor as gently as possible.

"I say, Kámenev, what speech do you make when you show the head?" asked an officer.

"No! … Let me kiss him. He gave me a sword!" shouted the Major.

Butler went out into the porch.

Márya Dmítrievna was sitting on the second step. She looked round at Butler, and at once turned angrily away again.

"What's the matter, Márya Dmítrievna?" asked he.

"You're all cutthroats! … I hate it! You're cutthroats, really," and she got up.

"It might happen to anyone," remarked Butler, not knowing what to say. "That's war."

"War? War, indeed! … Cutthroats and nothing else. A dead body should be given back to the earth, and they're grinning at it there! … Cutthroats, really," she repeated, as she descended the steps and entered the house by the back door.

Butler returned to the room, and asked Kámenev to tell them in detail how the thing had happened.

And Kámenev told them.

This is what had happened.

XXV

Hadji Murád was allowed to go out riding in the neighborhood of the town, but never without a convoy of Cossacks. There was only half a troop of them altogether in Nukhá, ten of whom were employed by the officers, so that if ten were sent out with Hadji Murád (according to the orders received) the same men would have had to go every other day. Therefore after ten had been sent out the first day, it was decided to send only five in future, and Hadji Murád was asked not to take all his henchmen with him. But on April the 25th he rode out with all five. When he mounted, the commander, noticing that all five henchmen were going with him, told him that he was forbidden to take them all; but Hadji Murád pretended not to hear, touched his horse, and the commander did not insist.

With the Cossacks rode a noncommissioned officer, Nazárov, who had received the Cross of St. George for bravery. He was a young, healthy, brown-haired lad, as fresh as a rose. He was the eldest of a poor family belonging to the sect of Old Believers, had grown up without a father, and had maintained his old mother, three sisters, and two brothers.

"Mind, Nazárov, keep close to him!" shouted the commander.

"All right, your honor!" answered Nazárov, and rising in his stirrups and adjusting the rifle that hung at his back, he started his fine large roan gelding at a trot. Four Cossacks followed him: Therapóntov, tall and thin, a regular thief and plunderer (it was he who had sold gunpowder to Gamzálo); Ignátov, a sturdy peasant who boasted of his strength, though he was no longer young, and had nearly completed his service; Míshkin, a weakly lad at whom everybody laughed; and the young fair-haired Petrakóv, his mother's only son, always amiable

and jolly.

The morning had been misty, but it cleared up later on, and the opening foliage, the young virgin grass, the sprouting corn, and the ripples of the rapid river just visible to the left of the road, all glittered in the sunshine.

Hadji Murád rode slowly along, followed by the Cossacks and by his henchmen. They rode out along the road beyond the fort at a walk. They met women carrying baskets on their heads, soldiers driving carts, and creaking wagons drawn by buffaloes. When he had gone about a mile and a half Hadji Murád touched up his white Kabardá horse, which started at an amble that obliged the henchmen and Cossacks to ride at a quick trot to keep up with him.

"Ah, he's got a fine horse under him," said Therapóntov. "If only he were still an enemy I'd soon bring him down."

"Yes, mate. Three hundred rubles were offered for that horse in Tiflis."

"But I can get ahead of him on mine," said Nazárov.

"You get ahead? A likely thing!"

Hadji kept increasing his pace.

"Hey, *kunák*, you mustn't do that. Steady!" cried Nazárov, starting to overtake Hadji Murád.

Hadji Murád looked round, said nothing, and continued to ride at the same pace.

"Mind, they're up to something, the devils!" said Ignátov. "See how they are tearing along."

So they rode for the best part of a mile in the direction of the mountains.

"I tell you it won't do!" shouted Nazárov.

Hadji Murád did not answer, and did not look round, but only increased his pace to a gallop.

"Humbug! You won't get away!" shouted Nazárov, stung to the quick. He gave his big roan gelding a cut with his whip, and rising in his stirrups and bending forward, flew full speed in pursuit of Hadji Murád.

The sky was so bright, the air so clear, and life played so joyously in Nazárov's soul as, becoming one with his fine strong horse, he flew along the smooth road behind Hadji Murád, that the possibility of anything sad or dreadful happening never occurred to him. He rejoiced that with every step he was gaining on Hadji Murád.

Hadji Murád judged by the approaching tramp of the big horse behind him that he would soon be overtaken, and seizing his pistol with

his right hand, with his left he began slightly to rein in his Kabardá horse, which was excited by hearing the tramp of hoofs behind it.

"You mustn't, I tell you!" shouted Nazárov, almost level with Hadji Murád and stretching out his hand to seize the latter's bridle. But before he reached it a shot was fired.—"What are you doing?" screamed Nazárov, catching hold of his breast. "At them, lads!" and he reeled and fell forward on his saddle bow.

But the mountaineers were beforehand in taking to their weapons, and fired their pistols at the Cossacks and hewed at them with their swords.

Nazárov hung on the neck of his horse, which careered round his comrades. The horse under Ignátov fell, crushing his leg, and two of the mountaineers, without dismounting, drew their swords and hacked at his head and arms. Petrakóv was about to rush to his comrade's rescue when two shots—one in his back and the other in his side—stung him, and he fell from his horse like a sack.

Míshkin turned round and galloped off towards the fortress. Khanéfi and Bata rushed after him, but he was already too far away and they could not catch him. When they saw that they could not overtake him they returned to the others.

Petrakóv lay on his back, his stomach ripped open, his young face turned to the sky, and while dying he gasped for breath like a fish.

Gamzálo, having finished off Ignátov with his sword, gave a cut to Nazárov too, and threw him from his horse. Bata took their cartridge-pouches from the slain. Khanéfi wished to take Nazárov's horse, but Hadji Murád called out to him to leave it, and dashed forward along the road. His *murids* galloped after him, driving away Nazárov's horse that tried to follow them. They were already among rice fields more than six miles from Nukhá when a shot was fired from the tower of that place to give the alarm.

"Oh, good Lord! Oh, dear me! Dear me! What have they done?" cried the commander of the fort, seizing his head with his hands when he heard of Hadji Murád's escape. "They've done for me! They've let him escape, the villains!" cried he, listening to Míshkin's account.

An alarm was raised everywhere, and not only the Cossacks of the place were sent after the fugitives, but also all the militia that could be mustered from the pro-Russian *aouls*. A thousand rubles reward was offered for the capture of Hadji Murád alive or dead, and two hours after he and his followers had escaped from the Cossacks more than two hundred mounted men were galloping after the officer in charge to find and capture the runaways.

After riding some miles along the high road, Hadji Murád checked his panting horse, which, wet with perspiration, had turned from white to grey.

To the right of the road could be seen the *sáklyas* and minarets of the *aoul* Benerdzhík, on the left lay some fields, and beyond them the river. Although the way to the mountains lay to the right, Hadji Murád turned in the opposite direction, to the left, assuming that his pursuers would be sure to go to the right; while he, abandoning the road, would cross the Alazán and come out onto the high road on the other side, where no one would expect him, and would ride along it to the forest, and then, after recrossing the river, would make his way to the mountains.

Having come to this conclusion, he turned to the left. But it proved impossible to reach the river. The rice field which had to be crossed had just been flooded, as is always done in spring, and had become a bog in which the horses' legs sank above their pasterns. Hadji Murád and his henchmen turned, now to the left, now to the right, hoping to find drier ground; but the field they happened to be in had been equally flooded all over, and was now saturated with water. The horses drew their feet out of the sticky mud into which they sank, with a pop like that of a cork drawn from a bottle, and stopped, panting, after every few steps. They struggled in this way so long that it began to grow dusk, and they had still not reached the river. To their left lay a patch of higher ground overgrown with shrubs, and Hadji Murád decided to ride in among these clumps and remain there till night to rest their worn-out horses and let them graze. The men themselves ate some bread and cheese they had brought with them. At last night came on and the moon that had been shining at first, hid behind the hill, and it became dark. There were a great many nightingales in that neighborhood, and there were two of them in these shrubs. As long as Hadji Murád and his men were making a noise among the bushes the nightingales had been silent, but when they became still, the birds again began to call to one another and to sing.

Hadji Murád, awake to all the sounds of night, listened to them involuntarily, and their trills reminded him of the song about Hamzád which he had heard the night before when he went to get water. He might now at any moment find himself in the position in which Hamzád had been. He fancied that it would be so, and suddenly his soul became serious. He spread out his burka and performed his ablutions, and scarcely had he finished before a sound was heard approaching their shelter. It was the sound of many horses' feet plashing through the

bog.

The keen-sighted Bata ran out to one edge of the clump, and peering through the darkness saw black shadows, which were men on foot and on horseback. Khanéfi discerned a similar crowd on the other side. It was Kargánov, the military commander of the district, with his militia.

"Well, then, we shall fight like Hamzád," thought Hadji Murád.

When the alarm was given, Kargánov, with a troop of militiamen and Cossacks, had rushed off in pursuit of Hadji Murád; but he had been unable to find any trace of him. He had already lost hope, and was returning home, when towards evening he met an old man and asked him if he had seen any horsemen about. The old man replied that he had. He had seen six horsemen floundering in the rice field, and then had seen them enter the clump where he himself was getting wood. Kargánov turned back, taking the old man with him; and seeing the hobbled horses, he made sure that Hadji Murád was there. In the night he surrounded the clump, and waited till morning to take Hadji Murád alive or dead.

Having understood that he was surrounded, and having discovered an old ditch among the shrubs, Hadji Murád decided to entrench himself in it, and to resist as long as strength and ammunition lasted. He told this to his comrades, and ordered them to throw up a bank in front of the ditch; and his henchmen at once set to work to cut down branches, dig up the earth with their daggers, and make an entrenchment. Hadji Murád himself worked with them.

As soon as it began to grow light the commander of the militia troop rode up to a clump and shouted:

"Hey! Hadji Murád, surrender! We are many and you are few!"

In reply came the report of a rifle, a cloudlet of smoke rose from the ditch, and a bullet hit the militiaman's horse, which staggered under him and began to fall. The rifles of the militiamen, who stood at the outskirts of the clump of shrubs, began cracking in their turn, and their bullets whistled and hummed, cutting off leaves and twigs and striking the embankment, but not the men entrenched behind it. Only Gamzálo's horse, that had strayed from the others, was hit in the head by a bullet. It did not fall, but breaking its hobbles and rushing among the bushes it ran to the other horses, pressing close to them, and watering the young grass with its blood. Hadji Murád and his men fired only when any of the militiamen came forward, and rarely missed their aim. Three militiamen were wounded, and the others, far from making up their minds to rush the entrenchment, retreated farther and

farther back, only firing from a distance and at random.

So it continued for more than an hour. The sun had risen to about half the height of the trees, and Hadji Murád was already thinking of leaping on his horse and trying to make his way to the river, when the shouts were heard of many men who had just arrived. These were Hadji Aga of Mekhtulí with his followers. There were about two hundred of them. Hadji Aga had once been Hadji Murád's *kunák*, and had lived with him in the mountains, but he had afterwards gone over to the Russians. With him was Akhmet Khan, the son of Hadji Murád's old enemy.

Like Kargánov, Hadji Aga began by calling to Hadji Murád to surrender, and Hadji Murád answered as before with a shot.

"Swords out, lads!" cried Hadji Aga, drawing his own; and a hundred voices were raised by men who rushed shrieking in among the shrubs.

The militiamen ran in among the shrubs, but from behind the entrenchment came the crack of one shot after another. Some three men fell, and the attackers stopped at the outskirts to the clump and also began firing. As they fired they gradually approached the entrenchment, running across from behind one shrub to another. Some succeeded in getting across; others fell under the bullets of Hadji Murád or of his men. Hadji Murád fired without missing; Gamzálo too rarely wasted a shot, and shrieked with joy every time he saw that his bullet had hit its aim. Khan Mahomá sat at the edge of the ditch singing "*Il lyakha il Allakh!*" and fired leisurely, but often missed. Eldár's whole body trembled with impatience to rush dagger in hand at the enemy, and he fired often and at random, constantly looking round at Hadji Murád and stretching out beyond the entrenchment. The shaggy Khanéfi, with his sleeves rolled up, did the duty of a servant even here. He loaded the guns which Hadji Murád and Khan Mahomá passed to him, carefully driving home with a ramrod the bullets wrapped in greasy rags, and pouring dry powder out of the powder flask onto the pans. Bata did not remain in the ditch as the others did, but kept running to the horses, driving them away to a safer place and shrieking incessantly, fired without using a prop for his gun. He was the first to be wounded. A bullet entered his neck, and he sat down spitting blood and swearing. Then Hadji Murád was wounded, the bullet piercing his shoulder. He tore some cotton wool from the lining of his *beshmét*, plugged the wound with it, and went on firing.

"Let us fly at them with our swords!" said Eldár for the third time, and he looked out from behind the bank of earth ready to rush at the

enemy; but at that instant a bullet struck him, and he reeled and fell backwards onto Hadji Murád's leg. Hadji Murád glanced at him. His beautiful ram's eyes gazed intently and seriously at Hadji Murád. His mouth, the upper lip pouting like a child's, twitched without opening. Hadji Murád drew his leg away from under him and continued firing.

Khanéfi bent over the dead Eldár and began taking the unused ammunition out of the cartridge cases of his coat.

Khan Mahomá meanwhile continued to sing, loading leisurely and firing. The enemy ran from shrub to shrub, hallooing and shrieking, and drawing ever nearer and nearer.

Another bullet hit Hadji Murád in the left side. He lay down in the ditch, and again pulled some cotton wool out of his *beshmét* and plugged the wound. This wound in the side was fatal, and he felt that he was dying. Memories and pictures succeeded one another with extraordinary rapidity in his imagination. Now he saw the powerful Abu Nutsal Khan as, dagger in hand and holding up his severed cheek, he rushed at his foe; then he saw the weak, bloodless old Vorontsóv, with his cunning white face, and heard his soft voice; and then he saw his son Yusúf, his wife Sofiát, and then the pale, red-bearded face of his enemy Shamil with half-closed eyes. All these images passed through his mind without evoking any feeling within him: neither pity nor anger nor any kind of desire; everything seemed so insignificant in comparison with what was beginning, or had already begun, within him.

Yet his strong body continued the thing that he had commenced. Gathering together his last strength, he rose from behind the bank, fired his pistol at a man who was just running towards him, and hit him. The man fell. Then Hadji Murád got quite out of the ditch, and, limping heavily, went dagger in hand straight at the foe.

Some shots cracked, and he reeled and fell. Several militiamen with triumphant shrieks rushed towards the fallen body. But the body that seemed to be dead, suddenly moved. First the uncovered, bleeding, shaven head rose; then, with hands holding to the trunk of a tree, the body rose. He seemed so terrible that those who were running towards him stopped short. But suddenly a shudder passed through him; he staggered away from the tree and fell on his face, stretched out at full length, like a thistle that had been mown down, and he moved no more.

He did not move, but still he felt.

When Hadji Aga, who was the first to reach him, struck him on the head with a large dagger, it seemed to Hadji Murád that someone was striking him with a hammer, and he could not understand who was

doing it, or why. That was his last consciousness of any connection with his body. He felt nothing more, and his enemies kicked and hacked at what had no longer anything in common with him.

Hadji Aga placed his foot on the back of the corpse, and with two blows cut off the head, and carefully—not to soil his shoes with blood—rolled it away with his foot. Crimson blood spurted from the arteries of the neck, and black blood flowed from the head, soaking the grass.

Kargánov and Hadji Aga and Akhmet Khan and all the militiamen gathered together—like sportsmen round a slaughtered animal—near the bodies of Hadji Murád and his men (Khanéfi, Khan Mahomá, and Gamzálo were bound), and amid the powder-smoke which hung over the bushes, they triumphed in their victory.

The nightingales, that had hushed their songs while the firing lasted, now started their trills once more: first one quite close, then others in the distance.

It was of this death that I was reminded by the crushed thistle in the midst of the ploughed field.

The Forged Coupon

Part I

I

Fedor Mihailovich Smokovnikov, the president of the local Income Tax Department, a man of unswerving honesty—and proud of it, too—a gloomy Liberal, a freethinker, and an enemy to every manifestation of religious feeling, which he thought a relic of superstition, came home from his office feeling very much annoyed. The Governor of the province had sent him an extraordinarily stupid minute, almost assuming that his dealings had been dishonest.

Fedor Mihailovich felt embittered, and wrote at once a sharp answer. On his return home everything seemed to go contrary to his wishes.

It was five minutes to five, and he expected the dinner to be served at once, but he was told it was not ready. He banged the door and went to his study. Somebody knocked at the door. “Who the devil is that?” he thought; and shouted—“Who is there?”

The door opened and a boy of fifteen came in, the son of Fedor

Mihailovich, a pupil of the fifth class of the local school.

"What do you want?"

"It is the first of the month today, father."

"Well! You want your money?"

It had been arranged that the father should pay his son a monthly allowance of three roubles as pocket money. Fedor Mihailovich frowned, took out of his pocketbook a coupon of two roubles fifty kopecks which he found among the banknotes, and added to it fifty kopecks in silver out of the loose change in his purse. The boy kept silent, and did not take the money his father proffered him.

"Father, please give me some more in advance."

"What?"

"I would not ask for it, but I have borrowed a small sum from a friend, and promised upon my word of honour to pay it off. My honour is dear to me, and that is why I want another three roubles. I don't like asking you; but, please, father, give me another three roubles."

"I have told you—"

"I know, father, but just for once."

"You have an allowance of three roubles and you ought to be content. I had not fifty kopecks when I was your age."

"Now, all my comrades have much more. Petrov and Ivanitsky have fifty roubles a month."

"And I tell you that if you behave like them you will be a scoundrel. Mind that."

"What is there to mind? You never understand my position. I shall be disgraced if I don't pay my debt. It is all very well for you to speak as you do."

"Be off, you silly boy! Be off!"

Fedor Mihailovich jumped from his seat and pounced upon his son. "Be off, I say!" he shouted. "You deserve a good thrashing, all you boys!"

His son was at once frightened and embittered. The bitterness was even greater than the fright. With his head bent down he hastily turned to the door. Fedor Mihailovich did not intend to strike him, but he was glad to vent his wrath, and went on shouting and abusing the boy till he had closed the door.

When the maid came in to announce that dinner was ready, Fedor Mihailovich rose.

"At last!" he said. "I don't feel hungry any longer."

He went to the dining-room with a sullen face. At table his wife made some remark, but he gave her such a short and angry answer

that she abstained from further speech. The son also did not lift his eyes from his plate, and was silent all the time. The trio finished their dinner in silence, rose from the table and separated, without a word.

After dinner the boy went to his room, took the coupon and the change out of his pocket, and threw the money on the table. After that he took off his uniform and put on a jacket.

He sat down to work, and began to study Latin grammar out of a dog's-eared book. After a while he rose, closed and bolted the door, shifted the money into a drawer, took out some cigarette papers, rolled one up, stuffed it with cotton wool, and began to smoke.

He spent nearly two hours over his grammar and writing books without understanding a word of what he saw before him; then he rose and began to stamp up and down the room, trying to recollect all that his father had said to him. All the abuse showered upon him, and worst of all his father's angry face, were as fresh in his memory as if he saw and heard them all over again. "Silly boy! You ought to get a good thrashing!" And the more he thought of it the angrier he grew. He remembered also how his father said: "I see what a scoundrel you will turn out. I know you will. You are sure to become a cheat, if you go on like that." He had certainly forgotten how he felt when he was young! "What crime have I committed, I wonder? I wanted to go to the theatre, and having no money borrowed some from Petia Grouchetsky. Was that so very wicked of me? Another father would have been sorry for me; would have asked how it all happened; whereas he just called me names. He never thinks of anything but himself. When it is he who has not got something he wants—that is a different matter! Then all the house is upset by his shouts. And I—I am a scoundrel, a cheat, he says. No, I don't love him, although he is my father. It may be wrong, but I hate him."

There was a knock at the door. The servant brought a letter—a message from his friend. "They want an answer," said the servant.

The letter ran as follows:

> I ask you now for the third time to pay me back the six roubles you have borrowed; you are trying to avoid me. That is not the way an honest man ought to behave. Will you please send the amount by my messenger? I am myself in a frightful fix. Can you not get the money somewhere?—Yours, according to whether you send the money or not, with scorn, or love,

"There we have it! Such a pig! Could he not wait a while? I will have another try."

Mitia went to his mother. This was his last hope. His mother was very kind, and hardly ever refused him anything. She would probably have helped him this time also out of his trouble, but she was in great anxiety: her younger child, Petia, a boy of two, had fallen ill. She got angry with Mitia for rushing so noisily into the nursery, and refused him almost without listening to what he had to say. Mitia muttered something to himself and turned to go. The mother felt sorry for him. "Wait, Mitia," she said; "I have not got the money you want now, but I will get it for you tomorrow."

But Mitia was still raging against his father.

"What is the use of having it tomorrow, when I want it today? I am going to see a friend. That is all I have got to say."

He went out, banging the door. …

"Nothing else is left to me. He will tell me how to pawn my watch," he thought, touching his watch in his pocket.

Mitia went to his room, took the coupon and the watch from the drawer, put on his coat, and went to Mahin.

II

Mahin was his schoolfellow, his senior, a grown-up young man with a moustache. He gambled, had a large feminine acquaintance, and always had ready cash. He lived with his aunt. Mitia quite realised that Mahin was not a respectable fellow, but when he was in his company he could not help doing what he wished. Mahin was in when Mitia called, and was just preparing to go to the theatre. His untidy room smelt of scented soap and eau de cologne.

"That's awful, old chap," said Mahin, when Mitia telling him about his troubles, showed the coupon and the fifty kopecks, and added that he wanted nine roubles more. "We might, of course, go and pawn your watch. But we might do something far better." And Mahin winked an eye.

"What's that?"

"Something quite simple." Mahin took the coupon in his hand. "Put *one* before the 2.50 and it will be 12.50."

"But do such coupons exist?"

"Why, certainly; the thousand roubles notes have coupons of 12.50. I have cashed one in the same way."

"You don't say so?"

"Well, yes or no?" asked Mahin, taking the pen and smoothing the coupon with the fingers of his left hand.

"But it is wrong."

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense, indeed," thought Mitia, and again his father's hard words came back to his memory. "Scoundrel! As you called me that, I might as well be it." He looked into Mahin's face. Mahin looked at him, smiling with perfect ease.

"Well?" he said.

"All right. I don't mind."

Mahin carefully wrote the unit in front of 2.50.

"Now let us go to the shop across the road; they sell photographers' materials there. I just happen to want a frame—for this young person here." He took out of his pocket a photograph of a young lady with large eyes, luxuriant hair, and an uncommonly well-developed bust.

"Is she not sweet? Eh?"

"Yes, yes … of course …"

"Well, you see.—But let us go."

Mahin took his coat, and they left the house.

III

The two boys, having rung the doorbell, entered the empty shop, which had shelves along the walls and photographic appliances on them, together with showcases on the counters. A plain woman, with a kind face, came through the inner door and asked from behind the counter what they required.

"A nice frame, if you please, madam."

"At what price?" asked the woman; she wore mittens on her swollen fingers with which she rapidly handled picture-frames of different shapes.

"These are fifty kopecks each; and these are a little more expensive. There is rather a pretty one, of quite a new style; one rouble and twenty kopecks."

"All right, I will have this. But could not you make it cheaper? Let us say one rouble."

"We don't bargain in our shop," said the shopkeeper with a dignified air.

"Well, I will take it," said Mahin, and put the coupon on the counter. "Wrap up the frame and give me change. But please be quick. We must be off to the theatre, and it is getting late."

"You have plenty of time," said the shopkeeper, examining the coupon very closely because of her shortsightedness.

"It will look lovely in that frame, don't you think so?" said Mahin, turning to Mitia.

"Have you no small change?" asked the shop-woman.

"I am sorry, I have not. My father gave me that, so I have to cash it."

"But surely you have one rouble twenty?"

"I have only fifty kopecks in cash. But what are you afraid of? You don't think, I suppose, that we want to cheat you and give you bad money?"

"Oh, no; I don't mean anything of the sort."

"You had better give it to me back. We will cash it somewhere else."

"How much have I to pay you back? Eleven and something."

She made a calculation on the counter, opened the desk, took out a ten-roubles note, looked for change and added to the sum six twenty-kopecks coins and two five-kopeck pieces.

"Please make a parcel of the frame," said Mahin, taking the money in a leisurely fashion.

"Yes, sir." She made a parcel and tied it with a string.

Mitia only breathed freely when the door bell rang behind them, and they were again in the street.

"There are ten roubles for you, and let me have the rest. I will give it back to you."

Mahin went off to the theatre, and Mitia called on Grouchetsky to repay the money he had borrowed from him.

IV

An hour after the boys were gone Eugene Mihailovich, the owner of the shop, came home, and began to count his receipts.

"Oh, you clumsy fool! Idiot that you are!" he shouted, addressing his wife, after having seen the coupon and noticed the forgery.

"But I have often seen you, Eugene, accepting coupons in payment, and precisely twelve rouble ones," retorted his wife, very humiliated, grieved, and all but bursting into tears. "I really don't know how they contrived to cheat me," she went on. "They were pupils of the school, in uniform. One of them was quite a handsome boy, and looked so comme il faut."

"A comme il faut fool, that is what you are!" The husband went

on scolding her, while he counted the cash. … When I accept coupons, I see what is written on them. And you probably looked only at the boys' pretty faces. "You had better behave yourself in your old age."

His wife could not stand this, and got into a fury.

"That is just like you men! Blaming everybody around you. But when it is you who lose fifty-four roubles at cards—that is of no consequence in your eyes."

"That is a different matter—"

"I don't want to talk to you," said his wife, and went to her room. There she began to remind herself that her family was opposed to her marriage, thinking her present husband far below her in social rank, and that it was she who insisted on marrying him. Then she went on thinking of the child she had lost, and how indifferent her husband had been to their loss. She hated him so intensely at that moment that she wished for his death. Her wish frightened her, however, and she hurriedly began to dress and left the house. When her husband came from the shop to the inner rooms of their flat she was gone. Without waiting for him she had dressed and gone off to friends—a teacher of French in the school, a Russified Pole, and his wife—who had invited her and her husband to a party in their house that evening.

V

The guests at the party had tea and cakes offered to them, and sat down after that to play whist at a number of card-tables.

The partners of Eugene Mihailovich's wife were the host himself, an officer, and an old and very stupid lady in a wig, a widow who owned a music-shop; she loved playing cards and played remarkably well. But it was Eugene Mihailovich's wife who was the winner all the time. The best cards were continually in her hands. At her side she had a plate with grapes and a pear and was in the best of spirits.

"And Eugene Mihailovich? Why is he so late?" asked the hostess, who played at another table.

"Probably busy settling accounts," said Eugene Mihailovich's wife. "He has to pay off the tradesmen, to get in firewood." The quarrel she had with her husband revived in her memory; she frowned, and her hands, from which she had not taken off the mittens, shook with fury against him.

"Oh, there he is.—We have just been speaking of you," said the hostess to Eugene Mihailovich, who came in at that very moment. "Why are you so late?"

"I was busy," answered Eugene Mihailovich, in a gay voice, rubbing his hands. And to his wife's surprise he came to her side and said—"You know, I managed to get rid of the coupon."

"No! You don't say so!"

"Yes, I used it to pay for a cartload of firewood I bought from a peasant."

And Eugene Mihailovich related with great indignation to the company present—his wife adding more details to his narrative—how his wife had been cheated by two unscrupulous schoolboys.

"Well, and now let us sit down to work," he said, taking his place at one of the whist-tables when his turn came, and beginning to shuffle the cards.

VI

Eugene Mihailovich had actually used the coupon to buy firewood from the peasant Ivan Mironov, who had thought of setting up in business on the seventeen roubles he possessed. He hoped in this way to earn another eight roubles, and with the twenty-five roubles thus amassed he intended to buy a good strong horse, which he would want in the spring for work in the fields and for driving on the roads, as his old horse was almost played out.

Ivan Mironov's commercial method consisted in buying from the stores a cord of wood and dividing it into five cartloads, and then driving about the town, selling each of these at the price the stores charged for a quarter of a cord. That unfortunate day Ivan Mironov drove out very early with half a cartload, which he soon sold. He loaded up again with another cartload which he hoped to sell, but he looked in vain for a customer; no one would buy it. It was his bad luck all that day to come across experienced townspeople, who knew all the tricks of the peasants in selling firewood, and would not believe that he had actually brought the wood from the country as he assured them. He got hungry, and felt cold in his ragged woollen coat. It was nearly below zero when evening came on; his horse which he had treated without mercy, hoping soon to sell it to the knacker's yard, refused to move a step. So Ivan Mironov was quite ready to sell his firewood at a loss when he met Eugene Mihailovich, who was on his way home from the tobacconist.

"Buy my cartload of firewood, sir. I will give it to you cheap. My poor horse is tired, and can't go any farther."

"Where do you come from?"

"From the country, sir. This firewood is from our place. Good dry wood, I can assure you."

"Good wood indeed! I know your tricks. Well, what is your price?"

Ivan Mironov began by asking a high price, but reduced it once, and finished by selling the cartload for just what it had cost him.

"I'm giving it to you cheap, just to please you, sir.—Besides, I am glad it is not a long way to your house," he added.

Eugene Mihailovich did not bargain very much. He did not mind paying a little more, because he was delighted to think he could make use of the coupon and get rid of it. With great difficulty Ivan Mironov managed at last, by pulling the shafts himself, to drag his cart into the courtyard, where he was obliged to unload the firewood unaided and pile it up in the shed. The yard-porter was out. Ivan Mironov hesitated at first to accept the coupon, but Eugene Mihailovich insisted, and as he looked a very important person the peasant at last agreed.

He went by the backstairs to the servants' room, crossed himself before the icon, wiped his beard which was covered with icicles, turned up the skirts of his coat, took out of his pocket a leather purse, and out of the purse eight roubles and fifty kopecks, and handed the change to Eugene Mihailovich. Carefully folding the coupon, he put it in the purse. Then, according to custom, he thanked the gentleman for his kindness, and, using the whip-handle instead of the lash, he belaboured the half-frozen horse that he had doomed to an early death, and betook himself to a public-house.

Arriving there, Ivan Mironov called for vodka and tea for which he paid eight kopecks. Comfortable and warm after the tea, he chatted in the very best of spirits with a yard-porter who was sitting at his table. Soon he grew communicative and told his companion all about the conditions of his life. He told him he came from the village Vassilievsky, twelve miles from town, and also that he had his allotment of land given to him by his family, as he wanted to live apart from his father and his brothers; that he had a wife and two children; the elder boy went to school, and did not yet help him in his work. He also said he lived in lodgings and intended going to the horse-fair the next day to look for a good horse, and, maybe, to buy one. He went on to state that he had now nearly twenty-five roubles—only one rouble short—and that half of it was a coupon. He took the coupon out of his purse to show to his new friend. The yard-porter was an illiterate man, but he said he had had such coupons given him by lodgers to change; that they were good; but that one might also chance on forged ones; so he advised the peasant, for the sake of security, to change it at once at

the counter. Ivan Mironov gave the coupon to the waiter and asked for change. The waiter, however, did not bring the change, but came back with the manager, a bald-headed man with a shining face, who was holding the coupon in his fat hand.

"Your money is no good," he said, showing the coupon, but apparently determined not to give it back.

"The coupon must be all right. I got it from a gentleman."

"It is bad, I tell you. The coupon is forged."

"Forged? Give it back to me."

"I will not. You fellows have got to be punished for such tricks. Of course, you did it yourself—you and some of your rascally friends."

"Give me the money. What right have you—"

"Sidor! Call a policeman," said the barman to the waiter. Ivan Mironov was rather drunk, and in that condition was hard to manage. He seized the manager by the collar and began to shout.

"Give me back my money, I say. I will go to the gentleman who gave it to me. I know where he lives."

The manager had to struggle with all his force to get loose from Ivan Mironov, and his shirt was torn—"Oh, that's the way you behave! Get hold of him."

The waiter took hold of Ivan Mironov; at that moment the policeman arrived. Looking very important, he inquired what had happened, and unhesitatingly gave his orders:

"Take him to the police-station."

As to the coupon, the policeman put it in his pocket; Ivan Mironov, together with his horse, was brought to the nearest station.

VII

Ivan Mironov had to spend the night in the police-station, in the company of drunkards and thieves. It was noon of the next day when he was summoned to the police officer; put through a close examination, and sent in the care of a policeman to Eugene Mihailovich's shop. Ivan Mironov remembered the street and the house.

The policeman asked for the shopkeeper, showed him the coupon and confronted him with Ivan Mironov, who declared that he had received the coupon in that very place. Eugene Mihailovich at once assumed a very severe and astonished air.

"You are mad, my good fellow," he said. "I have never seen this man before in my life," he added, addressing the policeman.

"It is a sin, sir," said Ivan Mironov. "Think of the hour when you

will die."

"Why, you must be dreaming! You have sold your firewood to someone else," said Eugene Mihailovich. "But wait a minute. I will go and ask my wife whether she bought any firewood yesterday." Eugene Mihailovich left them and immediately called the yard-porter Vassily, a strong, handsome, quick, cheerful, well-dressed man.

He told Vassily that if anyone should inquire where the last supply of firewood was bought, he was to say they'd got it from the stores, and not from a peasant in the street.

"A peasant has come," he said to Vassily, "who has declared to the police that I gave him a forged coupon. He is a fool and talks nonsense, but you, are a clever man. Mind you say that we always get the firewood from the stores. And, by the way, I've been thinking some time of giving you money to buy a new jacket," added Eugene Mihailovich, and gave the man five roubles. Vassily looking with pleasure first at the five rouble note, then at Eugene Mihailovich's face, shook his head and smiled.

"I know, those peasant folks have no brains. Ignorance, of course. Don't you be uneasy. I know what I have to say."

Ivan Mironov, with tears in his eyes, implored Eugene Mihailovich over and over again to acknowledge the coupon he had given him, and the yard-porter to believe what he said, but it proved quite useless; they both insisted that they had never bought firewood from a peasant in the street. The policeman brought Ivan Mironov back to the police-station, and he was charged with forging the coupon. Only after taking the advice of a drunken office clerk in the same cell with him, and bribing the police officer with five roubles, did Ivan Mironov get out of jail, without the coupon, and with only seven roubles left out of the twenty-five he had the day before.

Of these seven roubles he spent three in the public-house and came home to his wife dead drunk, with a bruised and swollen face.

His wife was expecting a child, and felt very ill. She began to scold her husband; he pushed her away, and she struck him. Without answering a word he lay down on the plank and began to weep bitterly.

Not till the next day did he tell his wife what had actually happened. She believed him at once, and thoroughly cursed the dastardly rich man who had cheated Ivan. He was sobered now, and remembering the advice a workman had given him, with whom he had many a drink the day before, decided to go to a lawyer and tell him of the wrong the owner of the photograph shop had done him.

VIII

The lawyer consented to take proceedings on behalf of Ivan Mironov, not so much for the sake of the fee, as because he believed the peasant, and was revolted by the wrong done to him.

Both parties appeared in the court when the case was tried, and the yard-porter Vassily was summoned as witness. They repeated in the court all they had said before to the police officials. Ivan Mironov again called to his aid the name of the Divinity, and reminded the shopkeeper of the hour of death. Eugene Mihailovich, although quite aware of his wickedness, and the risks he was running, despite the rebukes of his conscience, could not now change his testimony, and went on calmly to deny all the allegations made against him.

The yard-porter Vassily had received another ten roubles from his master, and, quite unperturbed, asserted with a smile that he did not know anything about Ivan Mironov. And when he was called upon to take the oath, he overcame his inner qualms, and repeated with assumed ease the terms of the oath, read to him by the old priest appointed to the court. By the holy Cross and the Gospel, he swore that he spoke the whole truth.

The case was decided against Ivan Mironov, who was sentenced to pay five roubles for expenses. This sum Eugene Mihailovich generously paid for him. Before dismissing Ivan Mironov, the judge severely admonished him, saying he ought to take care in the future not to accuse respectable people, and that he also ought to be thankful that he was not forced to pay the costs, and that he had escaped a prosecution for slander, for which he would have been condemned to three months' imprisonment.

"I offer my humble thanks," said Ivan Mironov; and, shaking his head, left the court with a heavy sigh.

The whole thing seemed to have ended well for Eugene Mihailovich and the yard-porter Vassily. But only in appearance. Something had happened which was not noticed by anyone, but which was much more important than all that had been exposed to view.

Vassily had left his village and settled in town over two years ago. As time went on he sent less and less money to his father, and he did not ask his wife, who remained at home, to join him. He was in no need of her; he could in town have as many wives as he wished, and much better ones too than that clumsy, village-bred woman. Vassily, with each recurring year, became more and more familiar with the ways of the town people, forgetting the conventions of a country life.

There everything was so vulgar, so grey, so poor and untidy. Here, in town, all seemed on the contrary so refined, nice, clean, and rich; so orderly too. And he became more and more convinced that people in the country live just like wild beasts, having no idea of what life is, and that only life in town is real. He read books written by clever writers, and went to the performances in the Peoples' Palace. In the country, people would not see such wonders even in dreams. In the country old men say: "Obey the law, and live with your wife; work; don't eat too much; don't care for finery," while here, in town, all the clever and learned people—those, of course, who know what in reality the law is—only pursue their own pleasures. And they are the better for it.

Previous to the incident of the forged coupon, Vassily could not actually believe that rich people lived without any moral law. But after that, still more after having perjured himself, and not being the worse for it in spite of his fears—on the contrary, he had gained ten roubles out of it—Vassily became firmly convinced that no moral laws whatever exist, and that the only thing to do is to pursue one's own interests and pleasures. This he now made his rule in life. He accordingly got as much profit as he could out of purchasing goods for lodgers. But this did not pay all his expenses. Then he took to stealing, whenever chance offered—money and all sorts of valuables. One day he stole a purse full of money from Eugene Mihailovich, but was found out. Eugene Mihailovich did not hand him over to the police, but dismissed him on the spot.

Vassily had no wish whatever to return home to his village, and remained in Moscow with his sweetheart, looking out for a new job. He got one as yard-porter at a grocer's, but with only small wages. The next day after he had entered that service he was caught stealing bags. The grocer did not call in the police, but gave him a good thrashing and turned him out. After that he could not find work. The money he had left was soon gone; he had to sell all his clothes and went about nearly in rags. His sweetheart left him. But notwithstanding, he kept up his high spirits, and when the spring came he started to walk home.

IX

Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, a short man in black spectacles (he had weak eyes, and was threatened with complete blindness), got up, as was his custom, at dawn of day, had a cup of tea, and putting on his

short fur coat trimmed with astrakhan, went to look after the work on his estate.

Peter Nikolaevich had been an official in the Customs, and had gained eighteen thousand roubles during his service. About twelve years ago he quitted the service—not quite of his own accord: as a matter of fact he had been compelled to leave—and bought an estate from a young landowner who had dissipated his fortune. Peter Nikolaevich had married at an earlier period, while still an official in the Customs. His wife, who belonged to an old noble family, was an orphan, and was left without money. She was a tall, stoutish, good-looking woman. They had no children. Peter Nikolaevich had considerable practical talents and a strong will. He was the son of a Polish gentleman, and knew nothing about agriculture and land management; but when he acquired an estate of his own, he managed it so well that after fifteen years the waste piece of land, consisting of three hundred acres, became a model estate. All the buildings, from the dwelling-house to the corn stores and the shed for the fire engine were solidly built, had iron roofs, and were painted at the right time. In the tool house carts, ploughs, harrows, stood in perfect order, the harness was well cleaned and oiled. The horses were not very big, but all home-bred, grey, well fed, strong and devoid of blemish.

The threshing machine worked in a roofed barn, the forage was kept in a separate shed, and a paved drain was made from the stables. The cows were home-bred, not very large, but giving plenty of milk; fowls were also kept in the poultry yard, and the hens were of a special kind, laying a great quantity of eggs. In the orchard the fruit trees were well whitewashed and propped on poles to enable them to grow straight. Everything was looked after—solid, clean, and in perfect order. Peter Nikolaevich rejoiced in the perfect condition of his estate, and was proud to have achieved it—not by oppressing the peasants, but, on the contrary, by the extreme fairness of his dealings with them.

Among the nobles of his province he belonged to the advanced party, and was more inclined to liberal than conservative views, always taking the side of the peasants against those who were still in favour of serfdom. "Treat them well, and they will be fair to you," he used to say. Of course, he did not overlook any carelessness on the part of those who worked on his estate, and he urged them on to work if they were lazy; but then he gave them good lodging, with plenty of good food, paid their wages without any delay, and gave them drinks on days of festival.

Walking cautiously on the melting snow—for the time of the year

was February—Peter Nikolaevich passed the stables, and made his way to the cottage where his workmen were lodged. It was still dark, the darker because of the dense fog; but the windows of the cottage were lighted. The men had already got up. His intention was to urge them to begin work. He had arranged that they should drive out to the forest and bring back the last supply of firewood he needed before spring.

"What is that?" he thought, seeing the door of the stable wide open. "Hallo, who is there?"

No answer. Peter Nikolaevich stepped into the stable. It was dark; the ground was soft under his feet, and the air smelt of dung; on the right side of the door were two loose boxes for a pair of grey horses. Peter Nikolaevich stretched out his hand in their direction—one box was empty. He put out his foot—the horse might have been lying down. But his foot did not touch anything solid. "Where could they have taken the horse?" he thought. They certainly had not harnessed it; all the sledges stood still outside. Peter Nikolaevich went out of the stable.

"Stepan, come here!" he called.

Stepan was the head of the workmen's gang. He was just stepping out of the cottage.

"Here I am!" he said, in a cheerful voice. "Oh, is that you, Peter Nikolaevich? Our men are coming."

"Why is the stable door open?"

"Is it? I don't know anything about it. I say, Proshka, bring the lantern!"

Proshka came with the lantern. They all went to the stable, and Stepan knew at once what had happened.

"Thieves have been here, Peter Nikolaevich," he said. "The lock is broken."

"No; you don't say so!"

"Yes, the brigands! I don't see 'Mashka.' 'Hawk' is here. But 'Beauty' is not. Nor yet 'Dapple-grey.' "

Three horses had been stolen!

Peter Nikolaevich did not utter a word at first. He only frowned and took deep breaths.

"Oh," he said after a while. "If only I could lay hands on them! Who was on guard?"

"Peter. He evidently fell asleep."

Peter Nikolaevich called in the police, and making an appeal to all the authorities, sent his men to track the thieves. But the horses were not to be found.

"Wicked people," said Peter Nikolaevich. "How could they! I was always so kind to them. Now, wait! Brigands! Brigands the whole lot of them. I will no longer be kind."

X

In the meanwhile the horses, the grey ones, had all been disposed of; Mashka was sold to the gipsies for eighteen roubles; Dapple-grey was exchanged for another horse, and passed over to another peasant who lived forty miles away from the estate; and Beauty died on the way. The man who conducted the whole affair was—Ivan Mironov. He had been employed on the estate, and knew all the whereabouts of Peter Nikolaevich. He wanted to get back the money he had lost, and stole the horses for that reason.

After his misfortune with the forged coupon, Ivan Mironov took to drink; and all he possessed would have gone on drink if it had not been for his wife, who locked up his clothes, the horses' collars, and all the rest of what he would otherwise have squandered in public-houses. In his drunken state Ivan Mironov was continually thinking, not only of the man who had wronged him, but of all the rich people who live on robbing the poor. One day he had a drink with some peasants from the suburbs of Podolsk, and was walking home together with them. On the way the peasants, who were completely drunk, told him they had stolen a horse from a peasant's cottage. Ivan Mironov got angry, and began to abuse the horse-thieves.

"What a shame!" he said. "A horse is like a brother to the peasant. And you robbed him of it? It is a great sin, I tell you. If you go in for stealing horses, steal them from the landowners. They are worse than dogs, and deserve anything."

The talk went on, and the peasants from Podolsk told him that it required a great deal of cunning to steal a horse on an estate.

"You must know all the ins and outs of the place, and must have somebody on the spot to help you."

Then it occurred to Ivan Mironov that he knew a landowner—Sventizky; he had worked on his estate, and Sventizky, when paying him off, had deducted one rouble and a half for a broken tool. He remembered well the grey horses which he used to drive at Sventizky's.

Ivan Mironov called on Peter Nikolaevich pretending to ask for employment, but really in order to get the information he wanted. He took precautions to make sure that the watchman was absent, and that the horses were standing in their boxes in the stable. He brought the

thieves to the place, and helped them to carry off the three horses.

They divided their gains, and Ivan Mironov returned to his wife with five roubles in his pocket. He had nothing to do at home, having no horse to work in the field, and therefore continued to steal horses in company with professional horse-thieves and gipsies.

XI

Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky did his best to discover who had stolen his horses. He knew somebody on the estate must have helped the thieves, and began to suspect all his staff. He inquired who had slept out that night, and the gang of the working men told him Proshka had not been in the whole night. Proshka, or Prokofy Nikolaevich, was a young fellow who had just finished his military service, handsome, and skilful in all he did; Peter Nikolaevich employed him at times as coachman. The district constable was a friend of Peter Nikolaevich, as were the provincial head of the police, the marshal of the nobility, and also the rural councillor and the examining magistrate. They all came to his house on his saint's day, drinking the cherry brandy he offered them with pleasure, and eating the nice preserved mushrooms of all kinds to accompany the liqueurs. They all sympathised with him in his trouble and tried to help him.

"You always used to take the side of the peasants," said the district constable, "and there you are! I was right in saying they are worse than wild beasts. Flogging is the only way to keep them in order. Well, you say it is all Proshka's doings. Is it not he who was your coachman sometimes?"

"Yes, that is he."

"Will you kindly call him?"

Proshka was summoned before the constable, who began to examine him.

"Where were you that night?"

Proshka pushed back his hair, and his eyes sparkled.

"At home."

"How so? All the men say you were not in."

"Just as you please, your honour."

"My pleasure has nothing to do with the matter. Tell me where you were that night."

"At home."

"Very well. Policeman, bring him to the police-station."

The reason why Proshka did not say where he had been that

night was that he had spent it with his sweetheart, Parasha, and had promised not to give her away. He kept his word. No proofs were discovered against him, and he was soon discharged. But Peter Nikolaevich was convinced that Prokofy had been at the bottom of the whole affair, and began to hate him. One day Proshka bought as usual at the merchant's two measures of oats. One and a half he gave to the horses, and half a measure he gave back to the merchant; the money for it he spent in drink. Peter Nikolaevich found it out, and charged Prokofy with cheating. The judge sentenced the man to three months' imprisonment.

Prokofy had a rather proud nature, and thought himself superior to others. Prison was a great humiliation for him. He came out of it very depressed; there was nothing more to be proud of in life. And more than that, he felt extremely bitter, not only against Peter Nikolaevich, but against the whole world.

On the whole, as all the people around him noticed, Prokofy became another man after his imprisonment, both careless and lazy; he took to drink, and he was soon caught stealing clothes at some woman's house, and found himself again in prison.

All that Peter Nikolaevich discovered about his grey horses was the hide of one of them, Beauty, which had been found somewhere on the estate. The fact that the thieves had got off scot-free irritated Peter Nikolaevich still more. He was unable now to speak of the peasants or to look at them without anger. And whenever he could he tried to oppress them.

XII

After having got rid of the coupon, Eugene Mihailovich forgot all about it; but his wife, Maria Vassilievna, could not forgive herself for having been taken in, nor yet her husband for his cruel words. And most of all she was furious against the two boys who had so skilfully cheated her. From the day she had accepted the forged coupon as payment, she looked closely at all the schoolboys who came in her way in the streets. One day she met Mahin, but did not recognise him, for on seeing her he made a face which quite changed his features. But when, a fortnight after the incident with the coupon, she met Mitia Smokovnikov face to face, she knew him at once.

She let him pass her, then turned back and followed him, and arriving at his house she made inquiries as to whose son he was. The next day she went to the school and met the divinity instructor, the

priest Michael Vedensky, in the hall. He asked her what she wanted. She answered that she wished to see the head of the school. "He is not quite well," said the priest. "Can I be of any use to you, or give him your message?"

Maria Vassilievna thought that she might as well tell the priest what was the matter. Michael Vedensky was a widower, and a very ambitious man. A year ago he had met Mitia Smokovnikov's father in society, and had had a discussion with him on religion. Smokovnikov had beaten him decisively on all points; indeed, he had made him appear quite ridiculous. Since that time the priest had decided to pay special attention to Smokovnikov's son; and, finding him as indifferent to religious matters as his father was, he began to persecute him, and even brought about his failure in examinations.

When Maria Vassilievna told him what young Smokovnikov had done to her, Vedensky could not help feeling an inner satisfaction. He saw in the boy's conduct a proof of the utter wickedness of those who are not guided by the rules of the Church. He decided to take advantage of this great opportunity of warning unbelievers of the perils that threatened them. At all events, he wanted to persuade himself that this was the only motive that guided him in the course he had resolved to take. But at the bottom of his heart he was only anxious to get his revenge on the proud atheist.

"Yes, it is very sad indeed," said Father Michael, toying with the cross he was wearing over his priestly robes, and passing his hands over its polished sides. "I am very glad you have given me your confidence. As a servant of the Church I shall admonish the young man—of course with the utmost kindness. I shall certainly do it in the way that befits my holy office," said Father Michael to himself, really thinking that he had forgotten the ill-feeling the boy's father had towards him. He firmly believed the boy's soul to be the only object of his pious care.

The next day, during the divinity lesson which Father Michael was giving to Mitia Smokovnikov's class, he narrated the incident of the forged coupon, adding that the culprit had been one of the pupils of the school. "It was a very wicked thing to do," he said; "but to deny the crime is still worse. If it is true that the sin has been committed by one of you, let the guilty one confess." In saying this, Father Michael looked sharply at Mitia Smokovnikov. All the boys, following his glance, turned also to Mitia, who blushed, and felt extremely ill at ease, with large beads of perspiration on his face. Finally, he burst into tears, and ran out of the classroom. His mother, noticing his trouble, found out the truth, ran at once to the photographer's shop, paid over

the twelve roubles and fifty kopecks to Maria Vassilievna, and made her promise to deny the boy's guilt. She further implored Mitia to hide the truth from everybody, and in any case to withhold it from his father.

Accordingly, when Fedor Mihailovich had heard of the incident in the divinity class, and his son, questioned by him, had denied all accusations, he called at once on the head of the school, told him what had happened, expressed his indignation at Father Michael's conduct, and said he would not let matters remain as they were.

Father Michael was sent for, and immediately fell into a hot dispute with Smokovnikov.

"A stupid woman first falsely accused my son, then retracts her accusation, and you of course could not hit on anything more sensible to do than to slander an honest and truthful boy!"

"I did not slander him, and I must beg you not to address me in such a way. You forget what is due to my cloth."

"Your cloth is of no consequence to me."

"Your perversity in matters of religion is known to everybody in the town!" replied Father Michael; and he was so transported with anger that his long thin head quivered.

"Gentlemen! Father Michael!" exclaimed the director of the school, trying to appease their wrath. But they did not listen to him.

"It is my duty as a priest to look after the religious and moral education of our pupils."

"Oh, cease your pretence to be religious! Oh, stop all this humbug of religion! As if I did not know that you believe neither in God nor Devil."

"I consider it beneath my dignity to talk to a man like you," said Father Michael, very much hurt by Smokovnikov's last words, the more so because he knew they were true.

Michael Vedensky carried on his studies in the academy for priests, and that is why, for a long time past, he ceased to believe in what he confessed to be his creed and in what he preached from the pulpit; he only knew that men ought to force themselves to believe in what he tried to make himself believe.

Smokovnikov was not shocked by Father Michael's conduct; he only thought it illustrative of the influence the Church was beginning to exercise on society, and he told all his friends how his son had been insulted by the priest.

Seeing not only young minds, but also the elder generation, contaminated by atheistic tendencies, Father Michael became more and more

convinced of the necessity of fighting those tendencies. The more he condemned the unbelief of Smokovnikov, and those like him, the more confident he grew in the firmness of his own faith, and the less he felt the need of making sure of it, or of bringing his life into harmony with it. His faith, acknowledged as such by all the world around him, became Father Michael's very best weapon with which to fight those who denied it.

The thoughts aroused in him by his conflict with Smokovnikov, together with the annoyance of being blamed by his chiefs in the school, made him carry out the purpose he had entertained ever since his wife's death—of taking monastic orders, and of following the course carried out by some of his fellow-pupils in the academy. One of them was already a bishop, another an archimandrite and on the way to become a bishop.

At the end of the term Michael Vedensky gave up his post in the school, took orders under the name of Missael, and very soon got a post as rector in a seminary in a town on the river Volga.

XIII

Meanwhile the yard-porter Vassily was marching on the open road down to the south.

He walked in daytime, and when night came some policeman would get him shelter in a peasant's cottage. He was given bread everywhere, and sometimes he was asked to sit down to the evening meal. In a village in the Orel district, where he had stayed for the night, he heard that a merchant who had hired the landowner's orchard for the season, was looking out for strong and able men to serve as watchmen for the fruit-crops. Vassily was tired of tramping, and as he had also no desire whatever to go back to his native village, he went to the man who owned the orchard, and got engaged as watchman for five roubles a month.

Vassily found it very agreeable to live in his orchard shed, and all the more so when the apples and pears began to grow ripe, and when the men from the barn supplied him every day with large bundles of fresh straw from the threshing machine. He used to lie the whole day long on the fragrant straw, with fresh, delicately smelling apples in heaps at his side, looking out in every direction to prevent the village boys from stealing fruit; and he used to whistle and sing meanwhile, to amuse himself. He knew no end of songs, and had a fine voice. When peasant women and young girls came to ask for apples, and to have a

chat with him, Vassily gave them larger or smaller apples according as he liked their looks, and received eggs or money in return. The rest of the time he had nothing to do, but to lie on his back and get up for his meals in the kitchen. He had only one shirt left, one of pink cotton, and that was in holes. But he was strongly built and enjoyed excellent health. When the kettle with black gruel was taken from the stove and served to the working men, Vassily used to eat enough for three, and filled the old watchman on the estate with unceasing wonder. At nights Vassily never slept. He whistled or shouted from time to time to keep off thieves, and his piercing, catlike eyes saw clearly in the darkness.

One night a company of young lads from the village made their way stealthily to the orchard to shake down apples from the trees. Vassily, coming noiselessly from behind, attacked them; they tried to escape, but he took one of them prisoner to his master.

Vassily's first shed stood at the farthest end of the orchard, but after the pears had been picked he had to remove to another shed only forty paces away from the house of his master. He liked this new place very much. The whole day long he could see the young ladies and gentlemen enjoying themselves; going out for drives in the evenings and quite late at nights, playing the piano or the violin, and singing and dancing. He saw the ladies sitting with the young students on the window sills, engaged in animated conversation, and then going in pairs to walk the dark avenue of lime trees, lit up only by streaks of moonlight. He saw the servants running about with food and drink, he saw the cooks, the stewards, the laundresses, the gardeners, the coachmen, hard at work to supply their masters with food and drink and constant amusement. Sometimes the young people from the master's house came to the shed, and Vassily offered them the choicest apples, juicy and red. The young ladies used to take large bites out of the apples on the spot, praising their taste, and spoke French to one another—Vassily quite understood it was all about him—and asked Vassily to sing for them.

Vassily felt the greatest admiration for his master's mode of living, which reminded him of what he had seen in Moscow; and he became more and more convinced that the only thing that mattered in life was money. He thought and thought how to get hold of a large sum of money. He remembered his former ways of making small profits whenever he could, and came to the conclusion that that was altogether wrong. Occasional stealing is of no use, he thought. He must arrange a well-prepared plan, and after getting all the information he wanted, carry out his purpose so as to avoid detection.

After the feast of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the last crop of autumn apples was gathered; the master was content with the results, paid off Vassily, and gave him an extra sum as reward for his faithful service.

Vassily put on his new jacket, and a new hat—both were presents from his master's son—but did not make his way homewards. He hated the very thought of the vulgar peasants' life. He went back to Moscow in company of some drunken soldiers, who had been watchmen in the orchard together with him. On his arrival there he at once resolved, under cover of night, to break into the shop where he had been employed, and beaten, and then turned out by the proprietor without being paid. He knew the place well, and knew where the money was locked up. So he bade the soldiers, who helped him, keep watch outside, and forcing the courtyard door entered the shop and took all the money he could lay his hands on. All this was done very cleverly, and no trace was left of the burglary. The money Vassily had found in the shop amounted to 370 roubles. He gave a hundred roubles to his assistants, and with the rest left for another town where he gave way to dissipation in company of friends of both sexes. The police traced his movements, and when at last he was arrested and put into prison he had hardly anything left out of the money which he had stolen.

XIV

Ivan Mironov had become a very clever, fearless and successful horse-thief. Afimia, his wife, who at first used to abuse him for his evil ways, as she called it, was now quite content and felt proud of her husband, who possessed a new sheepskin coat, while she also had a warm jacket and a new fur cloak.

In the village and throughout the whole district everyone knew quite well that Ivan Mironov was at the bottom of all the horse-stealing; but nobody would give him away, being afraid of the consequences. Whenever suspicion fell on him, he managed to clear his character. Once during the night he stole horses from the pasture ground in the village Kolotovka. He generally preferred to steal horses from landowners or tradespeople. But this was a harder job, and when he had no chance of success he did not mind robbing peasants too. In Kolotovka he drove off the horses without making sure whose they were. He did not go himself to the spot, but sent a young and clever fellow, Gerassim, to do the stealing for him. The peasants only got to know of the

theft at dawn; they rushed in all directions to hunt for the robbers. The horses, meanwhile, were hidden in a ravine in the forest lands belonging to the state.

Ivan Mironov intended to leave them there till the following night, and then to transport them with the utmost haste a hundred miles away to a man he knew. He visited Gerassim in the forest, to see how he was getting on, brought him a pie and some vodka, and was returning home by a side track in the forest where he hoped to meet nobody. But by ill-luck, he chanced on the keeper of the forest, a retired soldier.

"I say! Have you been looking for mushrooms?" asked the soldier.

"There were none to be found," answered Ivan Mironov, showing the basket of lime bark he had taken with him in case he might want it.

"Yes, mushrooms are scarce this summer," said the soldier. He stood still for a moment, pondered, and then went his way. He clearly saw that something was wrong. Ivan Mironov had no business whatever to take early morning walks in that forest. The soldier went back after a while and looked round. Suddenly he heard the snorting of horses in the ravine. He made his way cautiously to the place whence the sounds came. The grass in the ravine was trodden down, and the marks of horses' hoofs were clearly to be seen. A little further he saw Gerassim, who was sitting and eating his meal, and the horses tied to a tree.

The soldier ran to the village and brought back the bailiff, a police officer, and two witnesses. They surrounded on three sides the spot where Gerassim was sitting and seized the man. He did not deny anything; but, being drunk, told them at once how Ivan Mironov had given him plenty of drink, and induced him to steal the horses; he also said that Ivan Mironov had promised to come that night in order to take the horses away. The peasants left the horses and Gerassim in the ravine, and hiding behind the trees prepared to lie in ambush for Ivan Mironov. When it grew dark, they heard a whistle. Gerassim answered it with a similar sound. The moment Ivan Mironov descended the slope, the peasants surrounded him and brought him back to the village. The next morning a crowd assembled in front of the bailiff's cottage. Ivan Mironov was brought out and subjected to a close examination. Stepan Pelageushkine, a tall, stooping man with long arms, an aquiline nose, and a gloomy face was the first to put questions to him. Stepan had terminated his military service, and was of a solitary turn of mind. When he had separated from his father, and started his own home, he

had his first experience of losing a horse. After that he worked for two years in the mines, and made money enough to buy two horses. These two had been stolen by Ivan Mironov.

"Tell me where my horses are!" shouted Stepan, pale with fury, alternately looking at the ground and at Ivan Mironov's face.

Ivan Mironov denied his guilt. Then Stepan aimed so violent a blow at his face that he smashed his nose and the blood spurted out.

"Tell the truth, I say, or I'll kill you!"

Ivan Mironov kept silent, trying to avoid the blows by stooping. Stepan hit him twice more with his long arm. Ivan Mironov remained silent, turning his head backwards and forwards.

"Beat him, all of you!" cried the bailiff, and the whole crowd rushed upon Ivan Mironov. He fell without a word to the ground, and then shouted—"Devils, wild beasts, kill me if that's what you want! I am not afraid of you!"

Stepan seized a stone out of those that had been collected for the purpose, and with a heavy blow smashed Ivan Mironov's head.

XV

Ivan Mironov's murderers were brought to trial, Stepan Pelageushkine among them. He had a heavier charge to answer than the others, all the witnesses having stated that it was he who had smashed Ivan Mironov's head with a stone. Stepan concealed nothing when in court. He contented himself with explaining that, having been robbed of his two last horses, he had informed the police. Now it was comparatively easy at that time to trace the horses with the help of professional thieves among the gipsies. But the police officer would not even permit him, and no search had been ordered.

"Nothing else could be done with such a man. He has ruined us all."

"But why did not the others attack him. It was you alone who broke his head open."

"That is false. We all fell upon him. The village agreed to kill him. I only gave the final stroke. What is the use of inflicting unnecessary sufferings on a man?"

The judges were astonished at Stepan's wonderful coolness in narrating the story of his crime—how the peasants fell upon Ivan Mironov, and how he had given the final stroke. Stepan actually did not see anything particularly revolting in this murder. During his military service he had been ordered on one occasion to shoot a soldier, and, now with

regard to Ivan Mironov, he saw nothing loathsome in it. "A man shot is a dead man—that's all. It was him today, it might be me tomorrow," he thought. Stepan was only sentenced to one year's imprisonment, which was a mild punishment for what he had done. His peasant's dress was taken away from him and put in the prison stores, and he had a prison suit and felt boots given to him instead. Stepan had never had much respect for the authorities, but now he became quite convinced that all the chiefs, all the fine folk, all except the Czar—who alone had pity on the peasants and was just—all were robbers who suck blood out of the people. All he heard from the deported convicts, and those sentenced to hard labour, with whom he had made friends in prisons, confirmed him in his views. One man had been sentenced to hard labour for having convicted his superiors of a theft; another for having struck an official who had unjustly confiscated the property of a peasant; a third because he forged bank notes. The well-to-do-people, the merchants, might do whatever they chose and come to no harm; but a poor peasant, for a trumpery reason or for none at all, was sent to prison to become food for vermin.

He had visits from his wife while in prison. Her life without him was miserable enough, when, to make it worse, her cottage was destroyed by fire. She was completely ruined, and had to take to begging with her children. His wife's misery embittered Stepan still more. He got on very badly with all the people in the prison; was rude to everyone; and one day he nearly killed the cook with an axe, and therefore got an additional year in prison. In the course of that year he received the news that his wife was dead, and that he had no longer a home.

When Stepan had finished his time in prison, he was taken to the prison stores, and his own dress was taken down from the shelf and handed to him.

"Where am I to go now?" he asked the prison officer, putting on his old dress.

"Why, home."

"I have no home. I shall have to go on the road. Robbery will not be a pleasant occupation."

"In that case you will soon be back here."

"I am not so sure of that."

And Stepan left the prison. Nevertheless he took the road to his own place. He had nowhere else to turn.

On his way he stopped for a night's rest in an inn that had a public bar attached to it. The inn was kept by a fat man from the town, Vladimir, and he knew Stepan. He knew that Stepan had been put

into prison through ill luck, and did not mind giving him shelter for the night. He was a rich man, and had persuaded his neighbour's wife to leave her husband and come to live with him. She lived in his house as his wife, and helped him in his business as well.

Stepan knew all about the innkeeper's affairs—how he had wronged the peasant, and how the woman who was living with him had left her husband. He saw her now sitting at the table in a rich dress, and looking very hot as she drank her tea. With great condescension she asked Stepan to have tea with her. No other travellers were stopping in the inn that night. Stepan was given a place in the kitchen where he might sleep. Matrena—that was the woman's name—cleared the table and went to her room. Stepan went to lie down on the large stove in the kitchen, but he could not sleep, and the wood splinters put on the stove to dry were crackling under him, as he tossed from side to side. He could not help thinking of his host's fat paunch protruding under the belt of his shirt, which had lost its colour from having been washed ever so many times. Would not it be a good thing to make a good clean incision in that paunch. And that woman, too, he thought.

One moment he would say to himself, "I had better go from here tomorrow, bother them all!" But then again Ivan Mironov came back to his mind, and he went on thinking of the innkeeper's paunch and Matrena's white throat bathed in perspiration. "Kill I must, and it must be both!"

He heard the cock crow for the second time.

"I must do it at once, or dawn will be here." He had seen in the evening before he went to bed a knife and an axe. He crawled down from the stove, took the knife and axe, and went out of the kitchen door. At that very moment he heard the lock of the entrance door open. The innkeeper was going out of the house to the courtyard. It all turned out contrary to what Stepan desired. He had no opportunity of using the knife; he just swung the axe and split the innkeeper's head in two. The man tumbled down on the threshold of the door, then on the ground.

Stepan stepped into the bedroom. Matrena jumped out of bed, and remained standing by its side. With the same axe Stepan killed her also.

Then he lighted the candle, took the money out of the desk, and left the house.

XVI

In a small district town, some distance away from the other buildings, an old man, a former official, who had taken to drink, lived in his own house with his two daughters and his son-in-law. The married daughter was also addicted to drink and led a bad life, and it was the elder daughter, the widow Maria Semenovna, a wrinkled woman of fifty, who supported the whole family. She had a pension of two hundred and fifty roubles a year, and the family lived on this. Maria Semenovna did all the work in the house, looked after the drunken old father, who was very weak, attended to her sister's child, and managed all the cooking and the washing of the family. And, as is always the case, whatever there was to do, she was expected to do it, and was, moreover, continually scolded by all the three people in the house; her brother-in-law used even to beat her when he was drunk. She bore it all patiently, and as is also always the case, the more work she had to face, the quicker she managed to get through it. She helped the poor, sacrificing her own wants; she gave them her clothes, and was a ministering angel to the sick.

Once the lame, crippled village tailor was working in Maria Semenovna's house. He had to mend her old father's coat, and to mend and repair Maria Semenovna's fur-jacket for her to wear in winter when she went to market.

The lame tailor was a clever man, and a keen observer: he had seen many different people owing to his profession, and was fond of reflection, condemned as he was to a sedentary life.

Having worked a week at Maria Semenovna's, he wondered greatly about her life. One day she came to the kitchen, where he was sitting with his work, to wash a towel, and began to ask him how he was getting on. He told her of the wrong he had suffered from his brother, and how he now lived on his own allotment of land, separated from that of his brother.

"I thought I should have been better off that way," he said. "But I am now just as poor as before."

"It is much better never to change, but to take life as it comes," said Maria Semenovna. "Take life as it comes," she repeated.

"Why, I wonder at you, Maria Semenovna," said the lame tailor. "You alone do the work, and you are so good to everybody. But they don't repay you in kind, I see."

Maria Semenovna did not utter a word in answer.

"I dare say you have found out in books that we are rewarded in

heaven for the good we do here."

"We don't know that. But we must try to do the best we can."

"Is it said so in books?"

"In books as well," she said, and read to him the Sermon on the Mount. The tailor was much impressed. When he had been paid for his job and gone home, he did not cease to think about Maria Semenovna, both what she had said and what she had read to him.

XVII

Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky's views of the peasantry had now changed for the worse, and the peasants had an equally bad opinion of him. In the course of a single year they felled twenty-seven oaks in his forest, and burnt a barn which had not been insured. Peter Nikolaevich came to the conclusion that there was no getting on with the people around him.

At that very time the landowner, Liventsov, was trying to find a manager for his estate, and the Marshal of the Nobility recommended Peter Nikolaevich as the ablest man in the district in the management of land. The estate owned by Liventsov was an extremely large one, but there was no revenue to be got out of it, as the peasants appropriated all its wealth to their own profit. Peter Nikolaevich undertook to bring everything into order; rented out his own land to somebody else; and settled with his wife on the Liventsov estate, in a distant province on the river Volga.

Peter Nikolaevich was always fond of order, and wanted things to be regulated by law; and now he felt less able of allowing those raw and rude peasants to take possession, quite illegally too, of property that did not belong to them. He was glad of the opportunity of giving them a good lesson, and set seriously to work at once. One peasant was sent to prison for stealing wood; to another he gave a thrashing for not having made way for him on the road with his cart, and for not having lifted his cap to salute him. As to the pasture ground which was a subject of dispute, and was considered by the peasants as their property, Peter Nikolaevich informed the peasants that any of their cattle grazing on it would be driven away by him.

The spring came and the peasants, just as they had done in previous years, drove their cattle on to the meadows belonging to the landowner. Peter Nikolaevich called some of the men working on the estate and ordered them to drive the cattle into his yard. The peasants were working in the fields, and, disregarding the screaming of the women,

Peter Nikolaevich's men succeeded in driving in the cattle. When they came home the peasants went in a crowd to the cattle-yard on the estate, and asked for their cattle. Peter Nikolaevich came out to talk to them with a gun slung on his shoulder; he had just returned from a ride of inspection. He told them that he would not let them have their cattle unless they paid a fine of fifty kopecks for each of the horned cattle, and twenty kopecks for each sheep. The peasants loudly declared that the pasture ground was their property, because their fathers and grandfathers had used it, and protested that he had no right whatever to lay hand on their cattle.

"Give back our cattle, or you will regret it," said an old man coming up to Peter Nikolaevich.

"How shall I regret it?" cried Peter Nikolaevich, turning pale, and coming close to the old man.

"Give them back, you villain, and don't provoke us."

"What?" cried Peter Nikolaevich, and slapped the old man in the face.

"You dare to strike me? Come along, you fellows, let us take back our cattle by force."

The crowd drew close to him. Peter Nikolaevich tried to push his way, through them, but the peasants resisted him. Again he tried force.

His gun, accidentally discharged in the melee, killed one of the peasants. Instantly the fight began. Peter Nikolaevich was trodden down, and five minutes later his mutilated body was dragged into the ravine.

The murderers were tried by martial law, and two of them sentenced to the gallows.

XVIII

In the village where the lame tailor lived, in the Zemliansk district of the Voronesh province, five rich peasants hired from the landowner a hundred and five acres of rich arable land, black as tar, and let it out on lease to the rest of the peasants at fifteen to eighteen roubles an acre. Not one acre was given under twelve roubles. They got a very profitable return, and the five acres which were left to each of their company practically cost them nothing. One of the five peasants died, and the lame tailor received an offer to take his place.

When they began to divide the land, the tailor gave up drinking vodka, and, being consulted as to how much land was to be divided,

and to whom it should be given, he proposed to give allotments to all on equal terms, not taking from the tenants more than was due for each piece of land out of the sum paid to the landowner.

"Why so?"

"We are no heathens, I should think," he said. "It is all very well for the masters to be unfair, but we are true Christians. We must do as God bids. Such is the law of Christ."

"Where have you got that law from?"

"It is in the Book, in the Gospels; just come to me on Sunday, I will read you a few passages, and we will have a talk afterwards."

They did not all come to him on Sunday, but three came, and he began reading to them.

He read five chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, and they talked. One man only, Ivan Chouev, accepted the lesson and carried it out completely, following the rule of Christ in everything from that day. His family did the same. Out of the arable land he took only what was his due, and refused to take more.

The lame tailor and Ivan had people calling on them, and some of these people began to grasp the meaning of the Gospels, and in consequence gave up smoking, drinking, swearing, and using bad language and tried to help one another. They also ceased to go to church, and took their icons to the village priest, saying they did not want them any more. The priest was frightened, and reported what had occurred to the bishop. The bishop was at a loss what to do. At last he resolved to send the archimandrite Missael to the village, the one who had formerly been Mitia Smokovnikov's teacher of religion.

XIX

Asking Father Missael on his arrival to take a seat, the bishop told him what had happened in his diocese.

"It all comes from weakness of spirit and from ignorance. You are a learned man, and I rely on you. Go to the village, call the parishioners together, and convince them of their error."

"If your Grace bids me go, and you give me your blessing, I will do my best," said Father Missael. He was very pleased with the task entrusted to him. Every opportunity he could find to demonstrate the firmness of his faith was a boon to him. In trying to convince others he was chiefly intent on persuading himself that he was really a firm believer.

"Do your best. I am greatly distressed about my flock," said the

bishop, leisurely taking a cup with his white plump hands from the servant who brought in the tea.

"Why is there only one kind of jam? Bring another," he said to the servant. "I am greatly distressed," he went on, turning to Father Missael.

Missael earnestly desired to prove his zeal; but, being a man of small means, he asked to be paid for the expenses of his journey; and being afraid of the rough people who might be ill-disposed towards him, he also asked the bishop to get him an order from the governor of the province, so that the local police might help him in case of need. The bishop complied with his wishes, and Missael got his things ready with the help of his servant and his cook. They furnished him with a case full of wine, and a basket with the victuals he might need in going to such a lonely place. Fully provided with all he wanted, he started for the village to which he was commissioned. He was pleasantly conscious of the importance of his mission. All his doubts as to his own faith passed away, and he was now fully convinced of its reality.

His thoughts, far from being concerned with the real foundation of his creed—this was accepted as an axiom—were occupied with the arguments used against the forms of worship.

XX

The village priest and his wife received Father Missael with great honours, and the next day after he had arrived the parishioners were invited to assemble in the church. Missael in a new silk cassock, with a large cross on his chest, and his long hair carefully combed, ascended the pulpit; the priest stood at his side, the deacons and the choir at a little distance behind him, and the side entrances were guarded by the police. The dissenters also came in their dirty sheepskin coats.

After the service Missael delivered a sermon, admonishing the dissenters to return to the bosom of their mother, the Church, threatening them with the torments of hell, and promising full forgiveness to those who would repent.

The dissenters kept silent at first. Then, being asked questions, they gave answers. To the question why they dissented, they said that their chief reason was the fact that the Church worshipped gods made of wood, which, far from being ordained, were condemned by the Scriptures.

When asked by Missael whether they actually considered the holy icons to be mere planks of wood, Chouev answered—"Just look at the

back of any icon you choose and you will see what they are made of."

When asked why they turned against the priests, their answer was that the Scripture says: "As you have received it without fee, so you must give it to the others; whereas the priests require payment for the grace they bestow by the sacraments." To all attempts which Missael made to oppose them by arguments founded on Holy Writ, the tailor and Ivan Chouev gave calm but very firm answers, contradicting his assertions by appeal to the Scriptures, which they knew uncommonly well.

Missael got angry and threatened them with persecution by the authorities. Their answer was: It is said, I have been persecuted and so will you be.

The discussion came to nothing, and all would have ended well if Missael had not preached the next day at mass, denouncing the wicked seducers of the faithful and saying that they deserved the worst punishment. Coming out of the church, the crowd of peasants began to consult whether it would not be well to give the infidels a good lesson for disturbing the minds of the community. The same day, just when Missael was enjoying some salmon and gangfish, dining at the village priest's in company with the inspector, a violent brawl arose in the village. The peasants came in a crowd to Chouev's cottage, and waited for the dissenters to come out in order to give them a thrashing.

The dissenters assembled in the cottage numbered about twenty men and women. Missael's sermon and the attitude of the orthodox peasants, together with their threats, aroused in the mind of the dissenters angry feelings, to which they had before been strangers. It was near evening, the women had to go and milk the cows, and the peasants were still standing and waiting at the door.

A boy who stepped out of the door was beaten and driven back into the house. The people within began consulting what was to be done, and could come to no agreement. The tailor said, "We must bear whatever is done to us, and not resist." Chouev replied that if they decided on that course they would, all of them, be beaten to death. In consequence, he seized a poker and went out of the house. "Come!" he shouted, "let us follow the law of Moses!" And, falling upon the peasants, he knocked out one man's eye, and in the meanwhile all those who had been in his house contrived to get out and make their way home.

Chouev was thrown into prison and charged with sedition and blasphemy.

XXI

Two years previous to those events a strong and handsome young girl of an eastern type, Katia Turchaninova, came from the Don military settlements to St. Petersburg to study in the university college for women. In that town she met a student, Turin, the son of a district governor in the Simbirsk province, and fell in love with him. But her love was not of the ordinary type, and she had no desire to become his wife and the mother of his children. He was a dear comrade to her, and their chief bond of union was a feeling of revolt they had in common, as well as the hatred they bore, not only to the existing forms of government, but to all those who represented that government. They had also in common the sense that they both excelled their enemies in culture, in brains, as well as in morals. Katia Turchaninova was a gifted girl, possessed of a good memory, by means of which she easily mastered the lectures she attended. She was successful in her examinations, and, apart from that, read all the newest books. She was certain that her vocation was not to bear and rear children, and even looked on such a task with disgust and contempt. She thought herself chosen by destiny to destroy the present government, which was fettering the best abilities of the nation, and to reveal to the people a higher standard of life, inculcated by the latest writers of other countries. She was handsome, a little inclined to stoutness: she had a good complexion, shining black eyes, abundant black hair. She inspired the men she knew with feelings she neither wished nor had time to share, busy as she was with propaganda work, which consisted chiefly in mere talking. She was not displeased, however, to inspire these feelings; and, without dressing too smartly, did not neglect her appearance. She liked to be admired, as it gave her opportunities of showing how little she prized what was valued so highly by other women.

In her views concerning the method of fighting the government she went further than the majority of her comrades, and than her friend Turin; all means, she taught, were justified in such a struggle, not excluding murder. And yet, with all her revolutionary ideas, Katia Turchaninova was in her soul a very kind girl, ready to sacrifice herself for the welfare and the happiness of other people, and sincerely pleased when she could do a kindness to anybody, a child, an old person, or an animal.

She went in the summer to stay with a friend, a schoolmistress in a small town on the river Volga. Turin lived near that town, on his father's estate. He often came to see the two girls; they gave each

other books to read, and had long discussions, expressing their common indignation with the state of affairs in the country. The district doctor, a friend of theirs, used also to join them on many occasions.

The estate of the Turins was situated in the neighbourhood of the Liventsov estate, the one that was entrusted to the management of Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky. Soon after Peter Nikolaevich had settled there, and begun to enforce order, young Turin, having observed an independent tendency in the peasants on the Liventsov estate, as well as their determination to uphold their rights, became interested in them. He came often to the village to talk with the men, and developed his socialistic theories, insisting particularly on the nationalisation of the land.

After Peter Nikolaevich had been murdered, and the murderers sent to trial, the revolutionary group of the small town boiled over with indignation, and did not shrink from openly expressing it. The fact of Turin's visits to the village and his propaganda work among the students, became known to the authorities during the trial. A search was made in his house; and, as the police found a few revolutionary leaflets among his effects, he was arrested and transferred to prison in St. Petersburg.

Katia Turchaninova followed him to the metropolis, and went to visit him in prison. She was not admitted on the day she came, and was told to come on the day fixed by regulations for visits to the prisoners. When that day arrived, and she was finally allowed to see him, she had to talk to him through two gratings separating the prisoner from his visitor. This visit increased her indignation against the authorities. And her feelings become all the more revolutionary after a visit she paid to the office of a gendarme officer who had to deal with the Turin case. The officer, a handsome man, seemed obviously disposed to grant her exceptional favours in visiting the prisoner, if she would allow him to make love to her. Disgusted with him, she appealed to the chief of police. He pretended—just as the officer did when talking officially to her—to be powerless himself, and to depend entirely on orders coming from the minister of state. She sent a petition to the minister asking for an interview, which was refused.

Then she resolved to do a desperate thing and bought a revolver.

XXII

The minister was receiving petitioners at the usual hour appointed for the reception. He had talked successively to three of them, and now

a pretty young woman with black eyes, who was holding a petition in her left hand, approached. The minister's eyes gleamed when he saw how attractive the petitioner was, but recollecting his high position he put on a serious face.

"What do you want?" he asked, coming down to where she stood. Without answering his question the young woman quickly drew a revolver from under her cloak and aiming it at the minister's chest fired—but missed him.

The minister rushed at her, trying to seize her hand, but she escaped, and taking a step back, fired a second time. The minister ran out of the room. The woman was immediately seized. She was trembling violently, and could not utter a single word; after a while she suddenly burst into a hysterical laugh. The minister was not even wounded.

That woman was Katia Turchaninova. She was put into the prison of preliminary detention. The minister received congratulations and marks of sympathy from the highest quarters, and even from the emperor himself, who appointed a commission to investigate the plot that had led to the attempted assassination. As a matter of fact there was no plot whatever, but the police officials and the detectives set to work with the utmost zeal to discover all the threads of the non-existing conspiracy. They did everything to deserve the fees they were paid; they got up in the small hours of the morning, searched one house after another, took copies of papers and of books they found, read diaries, personal letters, made extracts from them on the very best notepaper and in beautiful handwriting, interrogated Katia Turchaninova ever so many times, and confronted her with all those whom they suspected of conspiracy, in order to extort from her the names of her accomplices.

The minister, a good-natured man at heart, was sincerely sorry for the pretty girl. But he said to himself that he was bound to consider his high state duties imposed upon him, even though they did not imply much work and trouble. So, when his former colleague, a chamberlain and a friend of the Turins, met him at a court ball and tried to rouse his pity for Turin and the girl Turchaninova, he shrugged his shoulders, stretching the red ribbon on his white waistcoat, and said: "*Je ne demanderais pas mieux que de relacher cette pauvre fillette, mais vous savez le devoir.*" And in the meantime Katia Turchaninova was kept in prison. She was at times in a quiet mood, communicated with her fellow-prisoners by knocking on the walls, and read the books that were sent to her. But then came days when she had fits of desperate fury, knocking with her fists against the wall, screaming and laughing like a

madwoman.

XXIII

One day Maria Semenovna came home from the treasurer's office, where she had received her pension. On her way she met a schoolmaster, a friend of hers.

"Good day, Maria Semenovna! Have you received your money?" the schoolmaster asked, in a loud voice from the other side of the street.

"I have," answered Maria Semenovna. "But it was not much; just enough to fill the holes."

"Oh, there must be some tidy pickings out of such a lot of money," said the schoolmaster, and passed on, after having said goodbye.

"Goodbye," said Maria Semenovna. While she was looking at her friend, she met a tall man face to face, who had very long arms and a stern look in his eyes. Coming to her house, she was very startled on again seeing the same man with the long arms, who had evidently followed her. He remained standing another moment after she had gone in, then turned and walked away.

Maria Semenovna felt somewhat frightened at first. But when she had entered the house, and had given her father and her nephew Fedia the presents she had brought for them, and she had patted the dog Treasure, who whined with joy, she forgot her fears. She gave the money to her father and began to work, as there was always plenty for her to do.

The man she met face to face was Stepan.

After he had killed the innkeeper, he did not return to town. Strange to say, he was not sorry to have committed that murder. His mind went back to the murdered man over and over again during the following day; and he liked the recollection of having done the thing so skilfully, so cleverly, that nobody would ever discover it, and he would not therefore be prevented from murdering other people in the same way. Sitting in the public-house and having his tea, he looked at the people around him with the same thought how he should murder them. In the evening he called at a carter's, a man from his village, to spend the night at his house. The carter was not in. He said he would wait for him, and in the meanwhile began talking to the carter's wife. But when she moved to the stove, with her back turned to him, the idea entered his mind to kill her. He marvelled at himself at first, and shook his head; but the next moment he seized the knife he had

hidden in his boot, knocked the woman down on the floor, and cut her throat. When the children began to scream, he killed them also and went away. He did not look out for another place to spend the night, but at once left the town. In a village some distance away he went to the inn and slept there. The next day he returned to the district town, and there he overheard in the street Maria Semenovna's talk with the schoolmaster. Her look frightened him, but yet he made up his mind to creep into her house, and rob her of the money she had received. When the night came he broke the lock and entered the house. The first person who heard his steps was the younger daughter, the married one. She screamed. Stepan stabbed her immediately with his knife. Her husband woke up and fell upon Stepan, seized him by his throat, and struggled with him desperately. But Stepan was the stronger man and overpowered him. After murdering him, Stepan, excited by the long fight, stepped into the next room behind a partition. That was Maria Semenovna's bedroom. She rose in her bed, looked at Stepan with her mild frightened eyes, and crossed herself.

Once more her look scared Stepan. He dropped his eyes.

"Where is your money?" he asked, without raising his face.

She did not answer.

"Where is the money?" asked Stepan again, showing her his knife.

"How can you …" she said.

"You will see how."

Stepan came close to her, in order to seize her hands and prevent her struggling with him, but she did not even try to lift her arms or offer any resistance; she pressed her hands to her chest, and sighed heavily.

"Oh, what a great sin!" she cried. "How can you! Have mercy on yourself. To destroy somebody's soul … and worse, your own! …"

Stepan could not stand her voice any longer, and drew his knife sharply across her throat. "Stop that talk!" he said. She fell back with a hoarse cry, and the pillow was stained with blood. He turned away, and went round the rooms in order to collect all he thought worth taking. Having made a bundle of the most valuable things, he lighted a cigarette, sat down for a while, brushed his clothes, and left the house. He thought this murder would not matter to him more than those he had committed before; but before he got a night's lodging, he felt suddenly so exhausted that he could not walk any farther. He stepped down into the gutter and remained lying there the rest of the night, and the next day and the next night.

Part II

I

The whole time he was lying in the gutter Stepan saw continually before his eyes the thin, kindly, and frightened face of Maria Semenovna, and seemed to hear her voice. "How can you?" she went on saying in his imagination, with her peculiar lisping voice. Stepan saw over again and over again before him all he had done to her. In horror he shut his eyes, and shook his hairy head, to drive away these thoughts and recollections. For a moment he would get rid of them, but in their place horrid black faces with red eyes appeared and frightened him continuously. They grinned at him, and kept repeating, "Now you have done away with her you must do away with yourself, or we will not leave you alone." He opened his eyes, and again he saw *her* and heard her voice; and felt an immense pity for her and a deep horror and disgust with himself. Once more he shut his eyes, and the black faces reappeared. Towards the evening of the next day he rose and went, with hardly any strength left, to a public-house. There he ordered a drink, and repeated his demands over and over again, but no quantity of liquor could make him intoxicated. He was sitting at a table, and swallowed silently one glass after another.

A police officer came in. "Who are you?" he asked Stepan.

"I am the man who murdered all the Dobrotvorov people last night," he answered.

He was arrested, bound with ropes, and brought to the nearest police-station; the next day he was transferred to the prison in the town. The inspector of the prison recognised him as an old inmate, and a very turbulent one; and, hearing that he had now become a real criminal, accosted him very harshly.

"You had better be quiet here," he said in a hoarse voice, frowning, and protruding his lower jaw. "The moment you don't behave, I'll flog you to death! Don't try to escape—I will see to that!"

"I have no desire to escape," said Stepan, dropping his eyes. "I surrendered of my own free will."

"Shut up! You must look straight into your superior's eyes when you talk to him," cried the inspector, and struck Stepan with his fist under the jaw.

At that moment Stepan again saw the murdered woman before him, and heard her voice; he did not pay attention, therefore, to the inspector's words.

"What?" he asked, coming to his senses when he felt the blow on his face.

"Be off! Don't pretend you don't hear."

The inspector expected Stepan to be violent, to talk to the other prisoners, to make attempts to escape from prison. But nothing of the kind ever happened. Whenever the guard or the inspector himself looked into his cell through the hole in the door, they saw Stepan sitting on a bag filled with straw, holding his head with his hands and whispering to himself. On being brought before the examining magistrate charged with the inquiry into his case, he did not behave like an ordinary convict. He was very absentminded, hardly listening to the questions; but when he heard what was asked, he answered truthfully, causing the utmost perplexity to the magistrate, who, accustomed as he was to the necessity of being very clever and very cunning with convicts, felt a strange sensation just as if he were lifting up his foot to ascend a step and found none. Stepan told him the story of all his murders; and did it frowning, with a set look, in a quiet, businesslike voice, trying to recollect all the circumstances of his crimes. "He stepped out of the house," said Stepan, telling the tale of his first murder, "and stood barefooted at the door; I hit him, and he just groaned; I went to his wife, …" And so on.

One day the magistrate, visiting the prison cells, asked Stepan whether there was anything he had to complain of, or whether he had any wishes that might be granted him. Stepan said he had no wishes whatever, and had nothing to complain of the way he was treated in prison. The magistrate, on leaving him, took a few steps in the foul passage, then stopped and asked the governor who had accompanied him in his visit how this prisoner was behaving.

"I simply wonder at him," said the governor, who was very pleased with Stepan, and spoke kindly of him. "He has now been with us about two months, and could be held up as a model of good behaviour. But I am afraid he is plotting some mischief. He is a daring man, and exceptionally strong."

II

During the first month in prison Stepan suffered from the same agonising vision. He saw the grey wall of his cell, he heard the sounds of the prison; the noise of the cell below him, where a number of convicts were confined together; the striking of the prison clock; the steps of the sentry in the passage; but at the same time he saw *her* with that

kindly face which conquered his heart the very first time he met her in the street, with that thin, strongly-marked neck, and he heard her soft, lisping, pathetic voice: "To destroy somebody's soul … and, worst of all, your own. … How can you? …"

After a while her voice would die away, and then black faces would appear. They would appear whether he had his eyes open or shut. With his closed eyes he saw them more distinctly. When he opened his eyes they vanished for a moment, melting away into the walls and the door; but after a while they reappeared and surrounded him from three sides, grinning at him and saying over and over: "Make an end! Make an end! Hang yourself! Set yourself on fire!" Stepan shook all over when he heard that, and tried to say all the prayers he knew: "Our Lady" or "Our Father." At first this seemed to help. In saying his prayers he began to recollect his whole life; his father, his mother, the village, the dog "Wolf," the old grandfather lying on the stove, the bench on which the children used to play; then the girls in the village with their songs, his horses and how they had been stolen, and how the thief was caught and how he killed him with a stone. He recollected also the first prison he was in and his leaving it, and the fat innkeeper, the carter's wife and the children. Then again *she* came to his mind and again he was terrified. Throwing his prison overcoat off his shoulders, he jumped out of bed, and, like a wild animal in a cage, began pacing up and down his tiny cell, hastily turning round when he had reached the damp walls. Once more he tried to pray, but it was of no use now.

The autumn came with its long nights. One evening when the wind whistled and howled in the pipes, Stepan, after he had paced up and down his cell for a long time, sat down on his bed. He felt he could not struggle any more; the black demons had overpowered him, and he had to submit. For some time he had been looking at the funnel of the oven. If he could fix on the knob of its lid a loop made of thin shreds of narrow linen straps it would hold. … But he would have to manage it very cleverly. He set to work, and spent two days in making straps out of the linen bag on which he slept. When the guard came into the cell he covered the bed with his overcoat. He tied the straps with big knots and made them double, in order that they might be strong enough to hold his weight. During these preparations he was free from tormenting visions. When the straps were ready he made a slipknot out of them, and put it round his neck, stood up in his bed, and hanged himself. But at the very moment that his tongue began to protrude the straps got loose, and he fell down. The guard rushed in at the

noise. The doctor was called in, Stepan was brought to the infirmary. The next day he recovered, and was removed from the infirmary, no more to solitary confinement, but to share the common cell with other prisoners.

In the common cell he lived in the company of twenty men, but felt as if he were quite alone. He did not notice the presence of the rest; did not speak to anybody, and was tormented by the old agony. He felt it most of all when the men were sleeping and he alone could not get one moment of sleep. Continually he saw *her* before his eyes, heard her voice, and then again the black devils with their horrible eyes came and tortured him in the usual way.

He again tried to say his prayers, but, just as before, it did not help him. One day when, after his prayers, she was again before his eyes, he began to implore her dear soul to forgive him his sin, and release him. Towards morning, when he fell down quite exhausted on his crushed linen bag, he fell asleep at once, and in his dream she came to him with her thin, wrinkled, and severed neck. "Will you forgive me?" he asked. She looked at him with her mild eyes and did not answer. "Will you forgive me?" And so he asked her three times. But she did not say a word, and he awoke. From that time onwards he suffered less, and seemed to come to his senses, looked around him, and began for the first time to talk to the other men in the cell.

III

Stepan's cell was shared among others by the former yard-porter, Vassily, who had been sentenced to deportation for robbery, and by Chouev, sentenced also to deportation. Vassily sang songs the whole day long with his fine voice, or told his adventures to the other men in the cell. Chouev was working at something all day, mending his clothes, or reading the Gospel and the Psalter.

Stepan asked him why he was put into prison, and Chouev answered that he was being persecuted because of his true Christian faith by the priests, who were all of them hypocrites and hated those who followed the law of Christ. Stepan asked what that true law was, and Chouev made clear to him that the true law consists in not worshipping gods made with hands, but worshipping the spirit and the truth. He told him how he had learnt the truth from the lame tailor at the time when they were dividing the land.

"And what will become of those who have done evil?" asked Stepan.

"The Scriptures give an answer to that," said Chouev, and read

aloud to him Matthew 25:31:—

> "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Vassily, who was sitting on the floor at Chouev's side, and was listening to his reading the Gospel, nodded his handsome head in approval. "True," he said in a resolute tone. "Go, you cursed villains, into everlasting punishment, since you did not give food to the hungry, but

swallowed it all yourself. Serves them right! I have read the holy Nikodim's writings," he added, showing off his erudition.

"And will they never be pardoned?" asked Stepan, who had listened silently, with his hairy head bent low down.

"Wait a moment, and be silent," said Chouev to Vassily, who went on talking about the rich who had not given meat to the stranger, nor visited him in the prison.

"Wait, I say!" said Chouev, again turning over the leaves of the Gospel. Having found what he was looking for, Chouev smoothed the page with his large and strong hand, which had become exceedingly white in prison:

> "And there were also two other malefactors, led with Him"—it means with Christ—"to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus—'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying—'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He be Christ, the chosen of God.' And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, 'If Thou be the King of the Jews save Thyself.' And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, 'This is the King of the Jews.' And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, 'If thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.' But the other answering rebuked Him, saying, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.' And he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.' "

Stepan did not say anything, and was sitting in thought, as if he were listening.

Now he knew what the true faith was. Those only will be saved who have given food and drink to the poor and visited the prisoners; those who have not done it, go to hell. And yet the malefactor had repented

on the cross, and went nevertheless to paradise. This did not strike him as being inconsistent. Quite the contrary. The one confirmed the other: the fact that the merciful will go to Heaven, and the unmerciful to hell, meant that everybody ought to be merciful, and the malefactor having been forgiven by Christ meant that Christ was merciful. This was all new to Stepan, and he wondered why it had been hidden from him so long.

From that day onward he spent all his free time with Chouev, asking him questions and listening to him. He saw but a single truth at the bottom of the teaching of Christ as revealed to him by Chouev: that all men are brethren, and that they ought to love and pity one another in order that all might be happy. And when he listened to Chouev, everything that was consistent with this fundamental truth came to him like a thing he had known before and only forgotten since, while whatever he heard that seemed to contradict it, he would take no notice of, as he thought that he simply had not understood the real meaning. And from that time Stepan was a different man.

IV

Stepan had been very submissive and meek ever since he came to the prison, but now he made the prison authorities and all his fellow-prisoners wonder at the change in him. Without being ordered, and out of his proper turn he would do all the very hardest work in prison, and the dirtiest too. But in spite of his humility, the other prisoners stood in awe of him, and were afraid of him, as they knew he was a resolute man, possessed of great physical strength. Their respect for him increased after the incident of the two tramps who fell upon him; he wrenched himself loose from them and broke the arm of one of them in the fight. These tramps had gambled with a young prisoner of some means and deprived him of all his money. Stepan took his part, and deprived the tramps of their winnings. The tramps poured their abuse on him; but when they attacked him, he got the better of them. When the Governor asked how the fight had come about, the tramps declared that it was Stepan who had begun it. Stepan did not try to exculpate himself, and bore patiently his sentence which was three days in the punishment-cell, and after that solitary confinement.

In his solitary cell he suffered because he could no longer listen to Chouev and his Gospel. He was also afraid that the former visions of *her* and of the black devils would reappear to torment him. But the visions were gone for good. His soul was full of new and happy ideas.

He felt glad to be alone if only he could read, and if he had the Gospel. He knew that he might have got hold of the Gospel, but he could not read.

He had started to learn the alphabet in his boyhood, but could not grasp the joining of the syllables, and remained illiterate. He made up his mind to start reading anew, and asked the guard to bring him the Gospels. They were brought to him, and he sat down to work. He contrived to recollect the letters, but could not join them into syllables. He tried as hard as he could to understand how the letters ought to be put together to form words, but with no result whatever. He lost his sleep, had no desire to eat, and a deep sadness came over him, which he was unable to shake off.

"Well, have you not yet mastered it?" asked the guard one day.

"No."

"Do you know 'Our Father'?"

"I do."

"Since you do, read it in the Gospels. Here it is," said the guard, showing him the prayer in the Gospels. Stepan began to read it, comparing the letters he knew with the familiar sounds.

And all of a sudden the mystery of the syllables was revealed to him, and he began to read. This was a great joy. From that moment he could read, and the meaning of the words, spelt out with such great pains, became more significant.

Stepan did not mind any more being alone. He was so full of his work that he did not feel glad when he was transferred back to the common cell, his private cell being needed for a political prisoner who had been just sent to prison.

V

In the meantime Mahin, the schoolboy who had taught his friend Smokovnikov to forge the coupon, had finished his career at school and then at the university, where he had studied law. He had the advantage of being liked by women, and as he had won favour with a vice-minister's former mistress, he was appointed when still young as examining magistrate. He was dishonest, had debts, had gambled, and had seduced many women; but he was clever, sagacious, and a good magistrate. He was appointed to the court of the district where Stepan Pelageushkine had been tried. When Stepan was brought to him the first time to give evidence, his sincere and quiet answers puzzled the magistrate. He somehow unconsciously felt that this man, brought to

him in fetters and with a shorn head, guarded by two soldiers who were waiting to take him back to prison, had a free soul and was immeasurably superior to himself. He was in consequence somewhat troubled, and had to summon up all his courage in order to go on with the inquiry and not blunder in his questions. He was amazed that Stepan should narrate the story of his crimes as if they had been things of long ago, and committed not by him but by some different man.

"Had you no pity for them?" asked Mahin.

"No. I did not know then."

"Well, and now?"

Stepan smiled with a sad smile. "Now," he said, "I would not do it even if I were to be burned alive."

"But why?"

"Because I have come to know that all men are brethren."

"What about me? Am I your brother also?"

"Of course you are."

"And how is it that I, your brother, am sending you to hard labour?"

"It is because you don't know."

"What do I not know?"

"Since you judge, it means obviously that you don't know."

"Go on. … What next?"

VI

Now it was not Chouev, but Stepan who used to read the gospel in the common cell. Some of the prisoners were singing coarse songs, while others listened to Stepan reading the gospel and talking about what he had read. The most attentive among those who listened were two of the prisoners, Vassily, and a convict called Mahorkin, a murderer who had become a hangman. Twice during his stay in this prison he was called upon to do duty as hangman, and both times in faraway places where nobody could be found to execute the sentences.

Two of the peasants who had killed Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, had been sentenced to the gallows, and Mahorkin was ordered to go to Pensa to hang them. On all previous occasions he used to write a petition to the governor of the province—he knew well how to read and to write—stating that he had been ordered to fulfil his duty, and asking for money for his expenses. But now, to the greatest astonishment of the prison authorities, he said he did not intend to go, and added that he would not be a hangman any more.

"And what about being flogged?" cried the governor of the prison.

"I will have to bear it, as the law commands us not to kill."

"Did you get that from Pelageushkine? A nice sort of a prison prophet! You just wait and see what this will cost you!"

When Mahin was told of that incident, he was greatly impressed by the fact of Stepan's influence on the hangman, who refused to do his duty, running the risk of being hanged himself for insubordination.

VII

At an evening party at the Eropkins, Mahin, who was paying attentions to the two young daughters of the house—they were rich matches, both of them—having earned great applause for his fine singing and playing the piano, began telling the company about the strange convict who had converted the hangman. Mahin told his story very accurately, as he had a very good memory, which was all the more retentive because of his total indifference to those with whom he had to deal. He never paid the slightest attention to other people's feelings, and was therefore better able to keep all they did or said in his memory. He got interested in Stepan Pelageushkine, and, although he did not thoroughly understand him, yet asked himself involuntarily what was the matter with the man? He could not find an answer, but feeling that there was certainly something remarkable going on in Stepan's soul, he told the company at the Eropkins all about Stepan's conversion of the hangman, and also about his strange behaviour in prison, his reading the Gospels and his great influence on the rest of the prisoners. All this made a special impression on the younger daughter of the family, Lisa, a girl of eighteen, who was just recovering from the artificial life she had been living in a boarding-school; she felt as if she had emerged out of water, and was taking in the fresh air of true life with ecstasy. She asked Mahin to tell her more about the man Pelageushkine, and to explain to her how such a great change had come over him. Mahin told her what he knew from the police official about Stepan's last murder, and also what he had heard from Pelageushkine himself—how he had been conquered by the humility, mildness, and fearlessness of a kind woman, who had been his last victim, and how his eyes had been opened, while the reading of the Gospels had completed the change in him.

Lisa Eropkin was not able to sleep that night. For a couple of months a struggle had gone on in her heart between society life, into which her sister was dragging her, and her infatuation for Mahin, com-

bined with a desire to reform him. This second desire now became the stronger. She had already heard about poor Maria Semenovna. But, after that kind woman had been murdered in such a ghastly way, and after Mahin, who learnt it from Stepan, had communicated to her all the facts concerning Maria Semenovna's life, Lisa herself passionately desired to become like her. She was a rich girl, and was afraid that Mahin had been courting her because of her money. So she resolved to give all she possessed to the poor, and told Mahin about it.

Mahin was very glad to prove his disinterestedness, and told Lisa that he loved her and not her money. Such proof of his innate nobility made him admire himself greatly. Mahin helped Lisa to carry out her decision. And the more he did so, the more he came to realise the new world of Lisa's spiritual ambitions, quite unknown to him heretofore.

VIII

All were silent in the common cell. Stepan was lying in his bed, but was not yet asleep. Vassily approached him, and, pulling him by his leg, asked him in a whisper to get up and to come to him. Stepan stepped out of his bed, and came up to Vassily.

"Do me a kindness, brother," said Vassily. "Help me!"

"In what?"

"I am going to fly from the prison."

Vassily told Stepan that he had everything ready for his flight.

"Tomorrow I shall stir them up—" He pointed to the prisoners asleep in their beds. "They will give me away, and I shall be transferred to the cell in the upper floor. I know my way from there. What I want you for is to unscrew the prop in the door of the mortuary."

"I can do that. But where will you go?"

"I don't care where. Are not there plenty of wicked people in every place?"

"Quite so, brother. But it is not our business to judge them."

"I am not a murderer, to be sure. I have not destroyed a living soul in my life. As for stealing, I don't see any harm in that. As if they have not robbed us!"

"Let them answer for it themselves, if they do."

"Bother them all! Suppose I rob a church, who will be hurt? This time I will take care not to break into a small shop, but will get hold of a lot of money, and then I will help people with it. I will give it to all good people."

One of the prisoners rose in his bed and listened. Stepan and

Vassily broke off their conversation. The next day Vassily carried out his idea. He began complaining of the bread in prison, saying it was moist, and induced the prisoners to call the governor and to tell him of their discontent. The governor came, abused them all, and when he heard it was Vassily who had stirred up the men, he ordered him to be transferred into solitary confinement in the cell on the upper floor. This was all Vassily wanted.

IX

Vassily knew well that cell on the upper floor. He knew its floor, and began at once to take out bits of it. When he had managed to get under the floor he took out pieces of the ceiling beneath, and jumped down into the mortuary a floor below. That day only one corpse was lying on the table. There in the corner of the room were stored bags to make hay mattresses for the prisoners. Vassily knew about the bags, and that was why the mortuary served his purposes. The prop in the door had been unscrewed and put in again. He took it out, opened the door, and went out into the passage to the lavatory which was being built. In the lavatory was a large hole connecting the third floor with the basement floor. After having found the door of the lavatory he went back to the mortuary, stripped the sheet off the dead body which was as cold as ice (in taking off the sheet Vassily touched his hand), took the bags, tied them together to make a rope, and carried the rope to the lavatory. Then he attached it to the crossbeam, and climbed down along it. The rope did not reach the ground, but he did not know how much was wanting. Anyhow, he had to take the risk. He remained hanging in the air, and then jumped down. His legs were badly hurt, but he could still walk on. The basement had two windows; he could have climbed out of one of them but for the grating protecting them. He had to break the grating, but there was no tool to do it with. Vassily began to look around him, and chanced on a piece of plank with a sharp edge; armed with that weapon he tried to loosen the bricks which held the grating. He worked a long time at that task. The cock crowed for the second time, but the grating still held. At last he had loosened one side; and then he pushed the plank under the loosened end and pressed with all his force. The grating gave way completely, but at that moment one of the bricks fell down heavily. The noise could have been heard by the sentry. Vassily stood motionless. But silence reigned. He climbed out of the window. His way of escape was to climb the wall. An outhouse stood in the corner

of the courtyard. He had to reach its roof, and pass thence to the top of the wall. But he would not be able to reach the roof without the help of the plank; so he had to go back through the basement window to fetch it. A moment later he came out of the window with the plank in his hands; he stood still for a while listening to the steps of the sentry. His expectations were justified. The sentry was walking up and down on the other side of the courtyard. Vassily came up to the outhouse, leaned the plank against it, and began climbing. The plank slipped and fell on the ground. Vassily had his stockings on; he took them off so that he could cling with his bare feet in coming down. Then he leaned the plank again against the house, and seized the water-pipe with his hands. If only this time the plank would hold! A quick movement up the water-pipe, and his knee rested on the roof. The sentry was approaching. Vassily lay motionless. The sentry did not notice him, and passed on. Vassily leaped to his feet; the iron roof cracked under him. Another step or two, and he would reach the wall. He could touch it with his hand now. He leaned forward with one hand, then with the other, stretched out his body as far as he could, and found himself on the wall. Only, not to break his legs in jumping down, Vassily turned round, remained hanging in the air by his hands, stretched himself out, loosened the grip of one hand, then the other. "Help, me, God!" He was on the ground. And the ground was soft. His legs were not hurt, and he ran at the top of his speed. In a suburb, Malania opened her door, and he crept under her warm coverlet, made of small pieces of different colours stitched together.

X

The wife of Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, a tall and handsome woman, as quiet and sleek as a well-fed heifer, had seen from her window how her husband had been murdered and dragged away into the fields. The horror of such a sight to Natalia Ivanovna was so intense—how could it be otherwise?—that all her other feelings vanished. No sooner had the crowd disappeared from view behind the garden fence, and the voices had become still; no sooner had the barefooted Malania, their servant, run in with her eyes starting out of her head, calling out in a voice more suited to the proclamation of glad tidings the news that Peter Nikolaevich had been murdered and thrown into the ravine, than Natalia Ivanovna felt that behind her first sensation of horror, there was another sensation; a feeling of joy at her deliverance from the tyrant, who through all the nineteen years of their married life had

made her work without a moment's rest. Her joy made her aghast; she did not confess it to herself, but hid it the more from those around. When his mutilated, yellow and hairy body was being washed and put into the coffin, she cried with horror, and wept and sobbed. When the coroner—a special coroner for serious cases—came and was taking her evidence, she noticed in the room, where the inquest was taking place, two peasants in irons, who had been charged as the principal culprits. One of them was an old man with a curly white beard, and a calm and severe countenance. The other was rather young, of a gipsy type, with bright eyes and curly dishevelled hair. She declared that they were the two men who had first seized hold of Peter Nikolaevich's hands. In spite of the gipsy-like peasant looking at her with his eyes glistening from under his moving eyebrows, and saying reproachfully: "A great sin, lady, it is. Remember your death hour!"—in spite of that, she did not feel at all sorry for them. On the contrary, she began to hate them during the inquest, and wished desperately to take revenge on her husband's murderers.

A month later, after the case, which was committed for trial by court-martial, had ended in eight men being sentenced to hard labour, and in two—the old man with the white beard, and the gipsy boy, as she called the other—being condemned to be hanged, Natalia felt vaguely uneasy. But unpleasant doubts soon pass away under the solemnity of a trial. Since such high authorities considered that this was the right thing to do, it must be right.

The execution was to take place in the village itself. One Sunday Malania came home from church in her new dress and her new boots, and announced to her mistress that the gallows were being erected, and that the hangman was expected from Moscow on Wednesday. She also announced that the families of the convicts were raging, and that their cries could be heard all over the village.

Natalia Ivanovna did not go out of her house; she did not wish to see the gallows and the people in the village; she only wanted what had to happen to be over quickly. She only considered her own feelings, and did not care for the convicts and their families.

On Tuesday the village constable called on Natalia Ivanovna. He was a friend, and she offered him vodka and preserved mushrooms of her own making. The constable, after eating a little, told her that the execution was not to take place the next day.

"Why?"

"A very strange thing has happened. There is no hangman to be found. They had one in Moscow, my son told me, but he has been

reading the Gospels a good deal and says: 'I will not commit a murder.' He had himself been sentenced to hard labour for having committed a murder, and now he objects to hang when the law orders him. He was threatened with flogging. 'You may flog me,' he said, 'but I won't do it.' "

Natalia Ivanovna grew red and hot at the thought which suddenly came into her head.

"Could not the death sentence be commuted now?"

"How so, since the judges have passed it? The Czar alone has the right of amnesty."

"But how would he know?"

"They have the right of appealing to him."

"But it is on my account they are to die," said that stupid woman, Natalia Ivanovna. "And I forgive them."

The constable laughed. "Well—send a petition to the Czar."

"May I do it?"

"Of course you may."

"But is it not too late?"

"Send it by telegram."

"To the Czar himself?"

"To the Czar, if you like."

The story of the hangman having refused to do his duty, and preferring to take the flogging instead, suddenly changed the soul of Natalia Ivanovna. The pity and the horror she felt the moment she heard that the peasants were sentenced to death, could not be stifled now, but filled her whole soul.

"Filip Vassilievich, my friend. Write that telegram for me. I want to appeal to the Czar to pardon them."

The constable shook his head. "I wonder whether that would not involve us in trouble?"

"I do it upon my own responsibility. I will not mention your name."

"Is not she a kind woman," thought the constable. "Very kind-hearted, to be sure. If my wife had such a heart, our life would be a paradise, instead of what it is now." And he wrote the telegram—"To his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor. Your Majesty's loyal subject, the widow of Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, murdered by the peasants, throws herself at the sacred feet (this sentence, when he wrote it down, pleased the constable himself most of all) of your Imperial Majesty, and implores you to grant an amnesty to the peasants so-and-so, from such a province, district, and village, who have been sentenced to death."

The telegram was sent by the constable himself, and Natalia

Ivanovna felt relieved and happy. She had a feeling that since she, the widow of the murdered man, had forgiven the murderers, and was applying for an amnesty, the Czar could not possibly refuse it.

XI

Lisa Eropkin lived in a state of continual excitement. The longer she lived a true Christian life as it had been revealed to her, the more convinced she became that it was the right way, and her heart was full of joy.

She had two immediate aims before her. The one was to convert Mahin; or, as she put it to herself, to arouse his true nature, which was good and kind. She loved him, and the light of her love revealed the divine element in his soul which is at the bottom of all souls. But, further, she saw in him an exceptionally kind and tender heart, as well as a noble mind. Her other aim was to abandon her riches. She had first thought of giving away what she possessed in order to test Mahin; but afterwards she wanted to do so for her own sake, for the sake of her own soul. She began by simply giving money to anyone who wanted it. But her father stopped that; besides which, she felt disgusted at the crowd of supplicants who personally, and by letters, besieged her with demands for money. Then she resolved to apply to an old man, known to be a saint by his life, and to give him her money to dispose of in the way he thought best. Her father got angry with her when he heard about it. During a violent altercation he called her mad, a raving lunatic, and said he would take measures to prevent her from doing injury to herself.

Her father's irritation proved contagious. Losing all control over herself, and sobbing with rage, she behaved with the greatest impertinence to her father, calling him a tyrant and a miser.

Then she asked his forgiveness. He said he did not mind what she said; but she saw plainly that he was offended, and in his heart did not forgive her. She did not feel inclined to tell Mahin about her quarrel with her father; as to her sister, she was very cold to Lisa, being jealous of Mahin's love for her.

"I ought to confess to God," she said to herself. As all this happened in Lent, she made up her mind to fast in preparation for the communion, and to reveal all her thoughts to the father confessor, asking his advice as to what she ought to decide for the future.

At a small distance from her town a monastery was situated, where an old monk lived who had gained a great reputation by his holy life, by

his sermons and prophecies, as well as by the marvellous cures ascribed to him.

The monk had received a letter from Lisa's father announcing the visit of his daughter, and telling him in what a state of excitement the young girl was. He also expressed the hope in that letter that the monk would influence her in the right way, urging her not to depart from the golden mean, and to live like a good Christian without trying to upset the present conditions of her life.

The monk received Lisa after he had seen many other people, and being very tired, began by quietly recommending her to be modest and to submit to her present conditions of life and to her parents. Lisa listened silently, blushing and flushed with excitement. When he had finished admonishing her, she began saying with tears in her eyes, timidly at first, that Christ bade us leave father and mother to follow Him. Getting more and more excited, she told him her conception of Christ. The monk smiled slightly, and replied as he generally did when admonishing his penitents; but after a while he remained silent, repeating with heavy sighs, "O God!" Then he said, "Well, come to confession tomorrow," and blessed her with his wrinkled hands.

The next day Lisa came to confession, and without renewing their interrupted conversation, he absolved her and refused to dispose of her fortune, giving no reasons for doing so.

Lisa's purity, her devotion to God and her ardent soul, impressed the monk deeply. He had desired long ago to renounce the world entirely; but the brotherhood, which drew a large income from his work as a preacher, insisted on his continuing his activity. He gave way, although he had a vague feeling that he was in a false position. It was rumoured that he was a miracle-working saint, whereas in reality he was a weak man, proud of his success in the world. When the soul of Lisa was revealed to him, he saw clearly into his own soul. He discovered how different he was to what he wanted to be, and realised the desire of his heart.

Soon after Lisa's visit he went to live in a separate cell as a hermit, and for three weeks did not officiate again in the church of the friary. After the celebration of the mass, he preached a sermon denouncing his own sins and those of the world, and urging all to repent.

From that day he preached every fortnight, and his sermons attracted increasing audiences. His fame as a preacher spread abroad. His sermons were extraordinarily fearless and sincere, and deeply impressed all who listened to him.

XII

Vassily was actually carrying out the object he had in leaving the prison. With the help of a few friends he broke into the house of the rich merchant Krasnopuzov, whom he knew to be a miser and a debauchee. Vassily took out of his writing-desk thirty thousand roubles, and began disposing of them as he thought right. He even gave up drink, so as not to spend that money on himself, but to distribute it to the poor; helping poor girls to get married; paying off people's debts, and doing this all without ever revealing himself to those he helped; his only desire was to distribute his money in the right way. As he also gave bribes to the police, he was left in peace for a long time.

His heart was singing for joy. When at last he was arrested and put to trial, he confessed with pride that he had robbed the fat merchant. "The money," he said, "was lying idle in that fool's desk, and he did not even know how much he had, whereas I have put it into circulation and helped a lot of good people."

The counsel for the defence spoke with such good humour and kindness that the jury felt inclined to discharge Vassily, but sentenced him nevertheless to confinement in prison. He thanked the jury, and assured them that he would find his way out of prison before long.

XIII

Natalia Ivanovna Sventizky's telegram proved useless. The committee appointed to deal with the petitions in the Emperor's name, decided not even to make a report to the Czar. But one day when the Sventizky case was discussed at the Emperor's luncheon-table, the chairman of the committee, who was present, mentioned the telegram which had been received from Sventizky's widow.

"*C'est très gentil de sa part*," said one of the ladies of the imperial family.

The Emperor sighed, shrugged his shoulders, adorned with epaulettes. "The law," he said; and raised his glass for the groom of the chamber to pour out some Moselle.

All those present pretended to admire the wisdom of the sovereign's words. There was no further question about the telegram. The two peasants, the old man and the young boy, were hanged by a Tartar hangman from Kazan, a cruel convict and a murderer.

The old man's wife wanted to dress the body of her husband in a white shirt, with white bands which serve as stockings, and new boots,

but she was not allowed to do so. The two men were buried together in the same pit outside the churchyard wall.

"Princess Sofia Vladimirovna tells me he is a very remarkable preacher," remarked the old Empress, the Emperor's mother, one day to her son: "*Faites le venir. Il peut precher à la cathedrale.*"

"No, it would be better in the palace church," said the Emperor, and ordered the hermit Isidor to be invited.

All the generals, and other high officials, assembled in the church of the imperial palace; it was an event to hear the famous preacher.

A thin and grey old man appeared, looked at those present, and said: "In the name of God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and began to speak.

At first all went well, but the longer he spoke the worse it became. "*Il devient de plus en plus aggressif*," as the Empress put it afterwards. He fulminated against everyone. He spoke about the executions and charged the government with having made so many necessary. How can the government of a Christian country kill men?

Everybody looked at everybody else, thinking of the bad taste of the sermon, and how unpleasant it must be for the Emperor to listen to it; but nobody expressed these thoughts aloud.

When Isidor had said Amen, the metropolitan approached, and asked him to call on him.

After Isidor had had a talk with the metropolitan and with the attorney-general, he was immediately sent away to a friary, not his own, but one at Suzdal, which had a prison attached to it; the prior of that friary was now Father Missael.

XIV

Everyone tried to look as if Isidor's sermon contained nothing unpleasant, and nobody mentioned it. It seemed to the Czar that the hermit's words had not made any impression on himself; but once or twice during that day he caught himself thinking of the two peasants who had been hanged, and the widow of Sventizky who had asked an amnesty for them. That day the Emperor had to be present at a parade; after which he went out for a drive; a reception of ministers came next, then dinner, after dinner the theatre. As usual, the Czar fell asleep the moment his head touched the pillow. In the night an awful dream awoke him: he saw gallows in a large field and corpses dangling on them; the tongues of the corpses were protruding, and their bodies moved and shook. And somebody shouted, "It is you—you who have done it!"

The Czar woke up bathed in perspiration and began to think. It was the first time that he had ever thought of the responsibilities which weighed on him, and the words of old Isidor came back to his mind. …

But only dimly could he see himself as a mere human being, and he could not consider his mere human wants and duties, because of all that was required of him as Czar. As to acknowledging that human duties were more obligatory than those of a Czar—he had not strength for that.

XV

Having served his second term in the prison, Prokofy, who had formerly worked on the Sventizky estate, was no longer the brisk, ambitious, smartly dressed fellow he had been. He seemed, on the contrary, a complete wreck. When sober he would sit idle and would refuse to do any work, however much his father scolded him; moreover, he was continually seeking to get hold of something secretly, and take it to the public-house for a drink. When he came home he would continue to sit idle, coughing and spitting all the time. The doctor on whom he called, examined his chest and shook his head.

"You, my man, ought to have many things which you have not got."

"That is usually the case, isn't it?"

"Take plenty of milk, and don't smoke."

"These are days of fasting, and besides we have no cow."

Once in spring he could not get any sleep; he was longing to have a drink. There was nothing in the house he could lay his hand on to take to the public-house. He put on his cap and went out. He walked along the street up to the house where the priest and the deacon lived together. The deacon's harrow stood outside leaning against the hedge. Prokofy approached, took the harrow upon his shoulder, and walked to an inn kept by a woman, Petrovna. She might give him a small bottle of vodka for it. But he had hardly gone a few steps when the deacon came out of his house. It was already dawn, and he saw that Prokofy was carrying away his harrow.

"Hey, what's that?" cried the deacon.

The neighbours rushed out from their houses. Prokofy was seized, brought to the police station, and then sentenced to eleven months' imprisonment. It was autumn, and Prokofy had to be transferred to the prison hospital. He was coughing badly; his chest was heaving from the exertion; and he could not get warm. Those who were stronger contrived not to shiver; Prokofy on the contrary shivered day and

night, as the superintendent would not light the fires in the hospital till November, to save expense.

Prokofy suffered greatly in body, and still more in soul. He was disgusted with his surroundings, and hated everyone—the deacon, the superintendent who would not light the fires, the guard, and the man who was lying in the bed next to his, and who had a swollen red lip. He began also to hate the new convict who was brought into hospital. This convict was Stepan. He was suffering from some disease on his head, and was transferred to the hospital and put in a bed at Prokofy's side. After a time that hatred to Stepan changed, and Prokofy became, on the contrary, extremely fond of him; he delighted in talking to him. It was only after a talk with Stepan that his anguish would cease for a while. Stepan always told everyone he met about his last murder, and how it had impressed him.

"Far from shrieking, or anything of that kind," he said to Prokofy, "she did not move. 'Kill me! There I am,' she said. 'But it is not my soul you destroy, it is your own.' "

"Well, of course, it is very dreadful to kill. I had one day to slaughter a sheep, and even that made me half mad. I have not destroyed any living soul; why then do those villains kill me? I have done no harm to anybody …"

"That will be taken into consideration."

"By whom?"

"By God, to be sure."

"I have not seen anything yet showing that God exists, and I don't believe in Him, brother. I think when a man dies, grass will grow over the spot, and that is the end of it."

"You are wrong to think like that. I have murdered so many people, whereas she, poor soul, was helping everybody. And you think she and I are to have the same lot? Oh no! Only wait."

"Then you believe the soul lives on after a man is dead?"

"To be sure; it truly lives."

Prokofy suffered greatly when death drew near. He could hardly breathe. But in the very last hour he felt suddenly relieved from all pain. He called Stepan to him. "Farewell, brother," he said. "Death has come, I see. I was so afraid of it before. And now I don't mind. I only wish it to come quicker."

XVI

In the meanwhile, the affairs of Eugene Mihailovich had grown worse and worse. Business was very slack. There was a new shop in the town; he was losing his customers, and the interest had to be paid. He borrowed again on interest. At last his shop and his goods were to be sold up. Eugene Mihailovich and his wife applied to everyone they knew, but they could not raise the four hundred roubles they needed to save the shop anywhere.

They had some hope of the merchant Krasnopuzov, Eugene Mihailovich's wife being on good terms with his mistress. But news came that Krasnopuzov had been robbed of a huge sum of money. Some said of half a million roubles. "And do you know who is said to be the thief?" said Eugene Mihailovich to his wife. "Vassily, our former yard-porter. They say he is squandering the money, and the police are bribed by him."

"I knew he was a villain. You remember how he did not mind perjuring himself? But I did not expect it would go so far."

"I hear he has recently been in the courtyard of our house. Cook says she is sure it was he. She told me he helps poor girls to get married."

"They always invent tales. I don't believe it."

At that moment a strange man, shabbily dressed, entered the shop.

"What is it you want?"

"Here is a letter for you."

"From whom?"

"You will see yourself."

"Don't you require an answer? Wait a moment."

"I cannot." The strange man handed the letter and disappeared.

"How extraordinary!" said Eugene Mihailovich, and tore open the envelope. To his great amazement several hundred rouble notes fell out. "Four hundred roubles!" he exclaimed, hardly believing his eyes. "What does it mean?"

The envelope also contained a badly-spelt letter, addressed to Eugene Mihailovich. "It is said in the Gospels," ran the letter, "do good for evil. You have done me much harm; and in the coupon case you made me wrong the peasants greatly. But I have pity for you. Here are four hundred notes. Take them, and remember your porter Vassily."

"Very extraordinary!" said Eugene Mihailovich to his wife and to himself. And each time he remembered that incident, or spoke about it to his wife, tears would come to his eyes.

XVII

Fourteen priests were kept in the Suzdal friary prison, chiefly for having been untrue to the orthodox faith. Isidor had been sent to that place also. Father Missael received him according to the instructions he had been given, and without talking to him ordered him to be put into a separate cell as a serious criminal. After a fortnight Father Missael, making a round of the prison, entered Isidor's cell, and asked him whether there was anything he wished for.

"There is a great deal I wish for," answered Isidor; "but I cannot tell you what it is in the presence of anybody else. Let me talk to you privately."

They looked at each other, and Missael saw he had nothing to be afraid of in remaining alone with Isidor. He ordered Isidor to be brought into his own room, and when they were alone, he said—"Well, now you can speak."

Isidor fell on his knees.

"Brother," said Isidor. "What are you doing to yourself! Have mercy on your own soul. You are the worst villain in the world. You have offended against all that is sacred …"

A month after Missael sent a report, asking that Isidor should be released as he had repented, and he also asked for the release of the rest of the prisoners. After which he resigned his post.

XVIII

Ten years passed. Mitia Smokovnikov had finished his studies in the Technical College; he was now an engineer in the gold mines in Siberia, and was very highly paid. One day he was about to make a round in the district. The governor offered him a convict, Stepan Pelageushkine, to accompany him on his journey.

"A convict, you say? But is not that dangerous?"

"Not if it is this one. He is a holy man. You may ask anybody, they will all tell you so."

"Why has he been sent here?"

The governor smiled. "He had committed six murders, and yet he is a holy man. I go bail for him."

Mitia Smokovnikov took Stepan, now a bald-headed, lean, tanned man, with him on his journey. On their way Stepan took care of Smokovnikov, like his own child, and told him his story; told him why he had been sent here, and what now filled his life.

And, strange to say, Mitia Smokovnikov, who up to that time used to spend his time drinking, eating, and gambling, began for the first time to meditate on life. These thoughts never left him now, and produced a complete change in his habits. After a time he was offered a very advantageous position. He refused it, and made up his mind to buy an estate with the money he had, to marry, and to devote himself to the peasantry, helping them as much as he could.

XIX

He carried out his intentions. But before retiring to his estate he called on his father, with whom he had been on bad terms, and who had settled apart with his new family. Mitia Smokovnikov wanted to make it up. The old man wondered at first, and laughed at the change he noticed in his son; but after a while he ceased to find fault with him, and thought of the many times when it was he who was the guilty one.

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